

King congratulates Blair

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein sent on Saturday a cable to the new British Prime Minister Tony Blair congratulating him and his party on winning the general election. The King wished Mr. Blair continued success and voiced keenness for strengthening the friendship between Jordan and Britain. Mr. Samir Mutaweh, minister of state for information expressed Jordan's confidence that the new Labour government "will continue to support the peace process at the U.N. Security Council and within the European Union."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية «الراي»

Saddam's new web site address

AMMAN (AFP) — An Iraqi company has celebrated President Saddam Hussein's 60th birthday by setting up an internet site to trumpet the Iraqi president's tenacious triumphs in cyberspace. A large eagle — its wings spread wide with the red, black and white Iraqi flag stamped on its chest — greets browsers at the site set up by the Baghdad-based Al Nahaj company. The World Wide Web (WWW) address for the site is: <http://196.27.0.22/Iraq>

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Price: Jordan 200 Fils

Crown Prince inaugurates \$80 million Jordanian-Japanese fertilisers factory

Joint venture is result of Japan's trust in Jordan's investment environment — Crown Prince Hassan

AQABA (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan the Regent said Saturday: "We are moving in the right direction by concentrating our efforts on infrastructure and development projects and by promoting Jordan's participation with friendly countries in this field."

In an address at a ceremony held in Aqaba for the inauguration of the Nippon-Jordan Fertiliser Company, a joint Japanese-Jordanian project to produce ammonium phosphates and compound fertilisers, the Crown Prince stressed the importance of increasing the development of such projects at a time when facts and figures speak of billions of dollars worth of arms being spent by the region during the past few years.

Prince Hassan said disparity is clear in the fact that infrastructure projects in the region extending from Tangiers to Istanbul are worth no more than \$35 million.

Prince Hassan who deputised for His Majesty King Hussein at the inauguration ceremony said: "It is no secret to say that Japan's contribution to this major project, which is one of the pillars of Jordanian industries, came as a result of Japan's confidence in Jordan's investment climate and in the country's stability and security."

Thanking the workers who built the plant the Regent described them as the country's manpower to whom King Hussein had referred by saying that "man is our most precious possession."

Referring to contributions from Japan, France and Jordan in this and other development projects, Prince Hassan said that these contributions were made largely due to the environment of democracy, stability, and

the free economic life which Jordan enjoys.

"Towards the end of the 70s, Jordan raised the slogan of (partners in development) and we are today witnessing a translation of this slogan into reality and facts on the ground represented in this major pioneering project in addition to scores of other joint projects executed in cooperation with friendly nations in the fields of industry, mining, and others," the Crown Prince said.

The Regent said this project which will soon start production "will serve as another form of cooperation with a friendly nation, Japan, in the interest of the two countries."

He said: "This project will serve as our ambassador to the Japanese market because we aspire to raising Jordan's 'made in Jordan' label that promotes our country's reputation."

Referring to the project of the new plant, he said the joint venture crowned cooperation between Jordan's Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) and the Arab Potash Company (APC) on the one hand and several Japanese companies that market fertilisers on the other.

The Regent said this venture will serve as a model to help attract other investments to Jordan.

"One should not overlook an important factor, which is, such projects tend to shorten distances, particularly as we are on the threshold of a stage for the utilisation of stability and trained manpower," said Prince Hassan.

He noted that production of compound fertilisers requires trained and qualified Jordanian engineers and chemists, will allow Jordan to bring new products into the Japanese market, will enable the country



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan inaugurates the Nippon-Jordan Fertiliser Company, a \$80 million Jordanian-Japanese project, on Saturday (photo by Yousef 'Allan)

to acquire new skills in manufacturing fertilisers and will earn Jordan foreign currency from the sale of \$60 million worth of output.

Describing this venture as one more fruit of close cooperation between Japan and Jordan, the Regent expressed hope that it will open the door for further major projects to be executed in conjunction with investors from Arab and friendly countries.

M. Motobashi, a representative of the Japanese group, addressed the ceremony noting that "the completion of the new fertiliser plant at this time and the production and export of chemical fertilisers that will ensue, will contribute greatly to Japanese agricultural production."

Mr. Motobashi added: "At present, the circumstances surrounding Japanese agriculture are very severe, and it is the mission of the Japanese Agricultural Cooperatives Organisation to ensure a stable supply of good quality fertiliser at a lower price to Japanese farmers as they have been demanding of us."

The \$85 million project

which was carried out by the Nippon-Jordan Fertiliser Company (NJFC) together with the JPMC and the APC has a 300,000 tonne annual production capacity.

In an interview with Paul Hijazin of Jordan Television, the Crown Prince said:

"We hope this is a clear indication of the very human interaction on the one side, the beneficiaries are at least 5 million Japanese farmers and we will be using this fertiliser and Japanese management and practice among our workers."

"We are seeing threshold of 'made in Jordan', I am delighted that we are entering new markets and developing our threshold of science and technology at this trade hub in the north of the Red Sea. It contributes to the fast track of the economy and development of the trade hub and the Jordan Rift Valley. I hope it will be a transparent, accountable, competitive, productive region in which all nationalities take part on the basis of a clear contribution to stability and inter-dependence between

us and the world at large."

The entire output will be exported to Japan, whereas the greatest share will be mandated to the National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations as a central point of distribution to other companies there.

According to officials, the plant has produced 7,000 tonnes since it began test production early last month.

The Nippon group has built a 3700-tonne vessel to transport the fertiliser to Japan and will begin loading the ship before June 15, according to Mr. Mohammad Karaki, NJFC Assistant general manager.

Under the provisions of the contract, the APC and the JPMC will each hold a 20 per cent equity in the project and the rest is owned by the Japanese group.

Prince Hassan toured sections of the plant and listened to officials who outlined the production process of the fertilisers which are based on Jordanian raw materials.

The project was initiated by Prince Hassan's visit to Japan in 1988.



His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and His Excellency Abdul Salam Majali at Aqaba airport minutes before His Majesty's departure to the Sultanate of Oman on Saturday (photo by Yousef 'Allan)

King meets with Sultan Qaboos; will attend nephew's engagement

MUSCAT (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday met with Sultan Qaboos Ben Saeed of Oman at his residence. The two leaders discussed bilateral relations, and joint Arab action concerning the Middle East peace process.

King Hussein and his accompanying delegation were received at the airport by Sultan Qaboos, Omani officials and dignitaries.

The King was seen off at Aqaba airport upon his departure for Oman by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, the two deputy prime ministers, cabinet members, president of the Aqaba Region Authority, Aqaba's governor and other officials. The Crown Prince was sworn in as Regent

before the Council of Ministers before His Majesty's departure.

King Hussein is accompanied on the trip by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Mohammad, the King's personal representative, Princes Abdullah and Ali, Chief of the Royal Court Awn Khasawneh, Prince Talal Ben Mobammad, Director of the National Security Council, Prince Ghazi Ben Mobammad, the King's cultural secretary, Prince Zeid Ben Ra'ed and Lieutenant General Hamid Al Fayez, the King's advisor on tribal affairs.

Sources in Amman said the King will also attend the engagement of his nephew, Prince Ghazi to Miss Areej Omar Zawawi, the daughter of one of Sultan Qaboos's leading advisers.

Prime minister in Qatar for 3-day bilateral talks

DOHA (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Saturday arrived here for a three-day official visit during which he will convey a message from his Majesty King Hussein to Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani of Qatar.

The message focuses on bilateral relations and other regional and international issues of common concern.

Talks between Dr. Majali and his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Abdullah Ben Khalifa on Sunday will focus on bilateral relations in political, economic and cultural fields.

The prime minister will also discuss with Qatari officials the latest developments in the Middle East region, particularly the peace process and the exerted efforts to put the peace march back on track in order to achieve a comprehensive, just and durable peace in the region.

Dr. Majali will review

with Sheikh Abdullah means of enhancing Arab solidarity and ways for activating joint Arab action.

On Sunday the prime minister will meet with Arab ambassadors to Qatar to review with them the latest developments in the Middle East and means to overcome all obstacles and remove challenges facing the Arab Nation.

Dr. Majali will hold a press conference on Monday during which he will talk about his visit to Qatar and the latest developments at the regional and international levels.

Before departure for Qatar, Dr. Majali chaired a Cabinet session and briefed the Council of Ministers on the topics to be discussed with Qatari officials — particularly issues concerning the Jordanian labour force and energy.

Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutaweh told reporters that

the prime minister briefed the Cabinet on his talks with the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the Japanese Parliament Ichiro Izawa, who had stressed his country's continued support for the Kingdom in economic fields.

Dr. Mutaweh said the Cabinet members were also briefed on last week's session which was chaired by King Hussein who discussed with concerned ministers methods of developing the Aqaba region.

The prime minister is accompanied by Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammad Horani, Minister of Labour Saleh Khasawneh, Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutaweh, Chairman of the Arab Affairs Committee at the Lower House of Parliament Fawzi Tueimeh and Senator Jawdat Shoul.

Aqaba to become a free zone, Cabinet decides

Government decision will attract international investment and turn Aqaba into a commercial centre — Crown Prince

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Saturday described a Cabinet decision to transform Aqaba into a free zone as "a comprehensive national development step which will boost Jordan's links with the world."

This decision will enable Jordan to benefit from its central geographic location, the availability of resources and qualified manpower, said the Crown Prince at a meeting of the Ministerial Development Council held in Aqaba in the presence of the president of the Aqaba Regional Authority, Aqaba's governor, the director of the Jordan Ports Corporation and several officials representing the potash and phosphate companies.

The Regent added that the decision, taken at the cabinet session earlier in the day, will also help in realising the comprehensive development project in the Jordan Rift Valley.

Earlier at the meeting,

Following are some of the decisions taken by the Cabinet on Saturday concerning the Aqaba Free Zone:

- Area, borders and functions will be decided upon at a later date.
- Will create a "Ministerial Committee for the Development of Aqaba."
- Will preserve Aqaba's role as a commercial port, industrial centre and tourist attraction.
- Will adopt the 'comprehensive planning principle' to coordinate between the different procedures so as to avoid overlapping, decrease expenses and maximise benefits.
- Will prohibit the use of the Aqaba coastline as a transportation route, and instead

establish new routes to connect the port city with the rest of the Kingdom.

- Will ease the administrative procedures concerning transit travellers and grant them exemption on exit fees to encourage tourism and investment in the area.

- Will take measures to facilitate the establishment of tourist investment projects in Aqaba and will reactivate related provisions of the Aqaba Region Authority Law.

- The board of directors of the Investment Encouragement Corporation will study the classification of tourist investments in Aqaba as provided for by the Investment Encouragement Law in order to offer tax exemptions equal to 75 per cent.

prepare the Aqaba Region Authority personnel in order to enable them to carry out their duties in the best possible manner.

The Prince, who chaired the meeting after inaugurating a joint Jordanian-Japanese fertilisers plant (see above story), underlined the importance of finding strategic international partners, such as Japan, Malaysia and others to benefit from the services in

Aqaba.

This will turn the port city into a regional and international investment-attracting, commercial centre, the Crown Prince explained.

Following the meeting which was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister for Services and Minister for Administrative Development Abdullah Ensour and Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and

Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Anani, Prince Hassan visited Al Ghamer area, which was returned to Jordanian sovereignty after the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in 1994, where the Crown Prince stressed the need to speed up the implementation of an agricultural investment programme benefiting Jordanian youth and called upon the young generation to participate actively in investing in the regained lands.

The Prince was briefed by the commander of the military unit deployed in the area on measures taken by the unit to regulate the entry of Israelis to the area. Some Israelis were permitted to use a 1.3-square-kilometre lot of land for agricultural purposes.

During the visit, the Prince was reassured on the conditions of military personnel serving in the area, praising their distinguished efforts in carrying out their duties.

Arafat calls for international intervention to revamp peace

TEL AVIV (AP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Saturday called on President Bill Clinton and the world community to save the deteriorating peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

The call by the Palestinian leader came days before U.S. envoy Dennis Ross is to return to the region for a new effort to restart the peace talks, which broke down in March.

In a statement released early Saturday morning after a five-hour cabinet meeting in autonomous Ramallah, Mr. Arafat said Israel's "malicious" settlement of the West Bank and East Jerusalem was aimed

at denying the Palestinians their own state.

"There is no way of getting out of this crisis without an international intervention," Mr. Arafat said in the statement. "U.S. President Bill Clinton, who sponsored the peace process, bears the burden of saving it."

The talks broke down after the Palestinians rejected Israel's offer of a relatively limited pullback from West Bank rural areas and Israel began building a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem, the sector where the Palestinians want their capital.

Israeli and Palestinian media have been speculating

that the United States would propose a package including no more settlement construction and an Israeli withdrawal from some 30 per cent of the West Bank's rural land within several months.

Palestinian Cabinet Minister Saeb Erekat said that he hoped "Ross will speak out this time against settlements and unilateral Israeli practices" — an apparent reference to past Palestinian claims that Mr. Ross was too easy on Israel.

Mr. Erekat also backed away from a statement by Arafat spokesman Marwan Kanafani on Thursday that the talks could resume even without Israel stopping the

U.N. undersecretary arrives to Iraq on start of six-day mission

Akashi to discuss means of removing obstacles impeding the implementation of oil-for-food deal

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The U.N. undersecretary for humanitarian affairs, Yasushi Akashi, arrived Saturday in Iraq on a six-day mission aimed at overcoming obstacles to implementing the oil-for-food deal.

"The United Nations wants to expedite the importation and distribution of these goods so that they can be distributed in a fair and equitable basis among all the civilian population in need," Mr. Akashi told reporters on his arrival.

Mr. Akashi is to meet Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sabah to hear complaints that implementation of the deal, which began last December, has dragged on for too long.

"In the beginning there were difficulties, including bureaucracy and political and technical (problems), and we are solving them one by one," Mr. Akashi said.

"You have to be patient, and we are determined to acquire even greater speed," he said.

U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard said in New York earlier this week that Mr. Akashi will also meet U.N. teams working in Iraq and will visit the autonomous Kurdish areas in the north, where the United Nations is expected to directly distribute food. Under the oil-for-food accord, Iraq is allowed to sell \$2 billion worth of crude oil every six months to purchase badly needed food and medicine.

A crippling U.N. economic embargo has been in effect against Iraq since it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Mr. Akashi added that U.N. officials had to wait to receive money from the sale of Iraqi oil to hire the officials to monitor the distribution of food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies.

"For us the initial problem was the lack of funds for the deployment of our observers," he said.

An Iraqi official said Friday that his government intends to use Mr. Akashi's visit to display the suffering of its people and demand the acceleration of the deal.

"The tours on the ground and the talks will allow Mr. Akashi to form a precise idea of the effects of the delay" in bringing in the food as allowed by Security Council Resolution 986, said the official, who asked not to be identified.

Iraq said that the \$1.3 billion allocated for humanitarian needs is not enough and that it will ask for an increase in oil sales for the third quarter.

But Mr. Akashi said he had yet to receive an official request from Iraqi officials.

"When such a proposal is made, then we will decide how to cope with it at the Security Council," he said.

The 15 members of the U.N. Security Council voted Thursday to maintain the sanctions against Iraq in its bi-monthly review.



U.N. Undersecretary for Humanitarian Affairs Yasushi Akashi talks to reporters on Saturday upon his arrival in Baghdad on a mission aimed at overcoming obstacles to implementing the oil-for-food deal (AFP photo)

Abu Marzouk gives up U.S. residency permit

AMMAN (AP) — Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzouk has given up his U.S. residency, setting the stage for his deportation to Jordan, a senior Hamas official said Saturday.

"Negotiations between Abu Marzouk's lawyers and U.S. officials have ended and we expect him to arrive in Jordan anytime," said Mohammad Nazzari, a Hamas representative to Jordan.

Mr. Nazzari told the Associated Press that Mr. Abu Marzouk had agreed to surrender his green card and not reappear in the future as part of the agreement with U.S. authorities. He declined to reveal when Mr. Abu Marzouk was expected in Jordan, saying U.S. authorities had

refused to release his itinerary citing "security reasons."

There was no immediate comment from U.S. officials. Jordan has agreed to host Mr. Abu Marzouk on humanitarian grounds. Earlier, Israel dropped its request for his extradition as a suspect in 10 terrorist attacks from 1990 to 1994 that killed 47 people.

A U.S. resident for 15 years, Mr. Abu Marzouk was detained in July 1995, reentering the United States, because his name had been added to a list of suspected terrorists.

Mr. Abu Marzouk has admitted to leading Hamas' political wing, but he insists he was not involved with the group's military wing, which has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Health of Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman worsens, say lawyers

NEW YORK (R) — The health of the Muslim cleric who was convicted for conspiracy to bomb New York landmarks and assassinate political leaders has so deteriorated in jail that his life could be in danger, his lawyers said on Friday.

The lawyers, including former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, said that regulations imposed by the U.S. government were to blame for Egyptian Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman's failing health. The sheikh is blind and has long suffered from diabetes, asthma and a heart condition.

U.S. prison authorities said the cleric was being treated fairly under the regulations introduced in May 1996 for prisoners linked with terror-

ism. The rules restrict contact with his wife to once a month and he can place calls only to his lawyers.

"It sounds like the sheikh's condition is deteriorating and obviously could be life-threatening. He is having trouble breathing, suffering severe headaches, itching from allergies and has abdominal pain around his liver and kidneys," Mr. Clark told Reuters.

Lynne Stewart, the lawyer who represented Sheikh Abdul Rahman in his 1995 trial, said: "They have given him a slow death sentence."

Mr. Clark said that for more than a month Sheikh Abdul Rahman had been kept in virtual isolation in a damp basement cell at Springfield federal prison in Missouri. Mr. Clark

said the cell had no ventilation. "We would dispute any claim that he is not being treated humanely and fairly," U.S. Bureau of Prisons spokesman Dan Dunne said.

In a May 1 letter to the Springfield prison warden, Pat Keohane, Mr. Clark complains that "the conditions of the air in his cell have worsened. He now puts water on the floor before sleeping, and sleeps on the floor with his face covered by a wet cloth in order to breathe more easily."

Mr. Clark, who also represented the blind cleric at his trial and is handling his appeal, said Sheikh Abdul Rahman had not been given tapes containing readings from the Koran and other religious texts he sent him.

Murderer becomes 3rd person executed in Kingdom this year

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 24-year-old man convicted of robbing and killing a grocery shopowner in Jabal Amman in 1995 was hanged at dawn on Saturday at Swaga prison, judicial sources said.

A judicial source, who attended the execution, told the Jordan Times Saturday that the convict, Mohammad Musa, was pronounced dead within 15 minutes.

He said that before his execution, the prisoner asked for "forgiveness and expressed his regrets over what he did."

Mr. Musa, along with a second man, Samer Haron, 22, was sentenced to death by the Criminal Court in March 1996.

The court found Mr. Musa guilty of stabbing to death Rabi Tawfiq Odeh, 22, in the Tawfiq Grocery Shop on Youssef Izzidin Street near the Third Circle on Nov. 16, 1995.

Mr. Haron was sentenced to death by the same court for complicity in the murder, but his death sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment with hard labour by the Court of Cassation.

The two men had robbed their victim of less than JD 20.

According to court transcripts, both men were drug addicts and they had planned to rob the store.

The perpetrators monitored the shop,

and when it was empty of customers, they entered and asked the victim for an item on the top shelf behind the sales counter, the court said.

"When Mr. Odeh turned his back Mohammad Musa stabbed him once in the back," the court document said.

Wounded, Mr. Odeh ran to the storage room. Mohammad Musa followed him and stabbed him twice in the chest, the court said.

A customer who had entered the shop at the time of the incident was threatened and robbed by the assailants, added the court.

The assailants then fled the scene. Mr. Rabi, the son of the shop owner, died shortly after the stabbing.

The court relied on the confessions of both men before the prosecution, and the testimony of the customer who positively identified the men in court and in a police line-up.

A Royal Decree approving the death sentence on Mohammad Musa was issued following the Court of Cassation's review of the case.

Mohammad Musa, a resident of Zarqa, was the third person to be executed in the Kingdom this year.

According to the judicial source, nine people, including three women, are on the death row.

Syrian paper encouraged by policy of U.K.'s Blair

DAMASCUS (R) — An official Syrian newspaper said on Saturday it believed new British Prime Minister Tony Blair would give Europe a greater role in the Middle East peace process.

"Blair said he would support peace on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks and that he was committed to the land-for-peace principle, which constitutes the core of the peace process," the Tishreen daily said.

"These statements are, no doubt, encouraging," the paper said.

Syria has condemned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rejection of swapping occupied Arab lands for peace. It said negotiations with Israel, halted for over a year, would not resume until Mr. Netanyahu showed readiness to return all the Golan Heights, captured by Israel in 1967.

Tishreen said Britain and Europe have a chance to increase their influence in the Middle East peace process from the United States, the main broker of the Arab-Israeli peace talks.

"With the shrinking of the U.S. role due to the flagrant U.S. submission to Israel, the region and the world look for a more effective European role. Britain can contribute to the shaping of this role as Blair himself declared," Tishreen said.

PNA orders officials to return Holy Sepulchre rooms

RAMALLAH (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) ordered Muslim officials Saturday to return two rooms they seized in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, one of Christianity's holiest sites, to Greek Orthodox authorities.

"The PNA ordered a return to the previous status without any change," it said in a statement published by the official Wafa news agency after the Palestinian cabinet met here.

Last month, officials of Al Khanka Mosque next to the church broke through a common wall and took over two rooms belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church, which is divided among a plethora of Christian denominations. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is built on the site where Jesus Christ was crucified and buried, according to Orthodox Christian tradition.

The statement also said: "The Palestinian (National) Authority has charged the Jerusalem Committee with immediately implementing the decision" to return the area to the Greek Orthodox.

The PNA maintains a large influence over the Muslim holy sites in East Jerusalem.

"Jerusalem's Christians and Muslims should act together against Israel's attempts to Judaize Jerusalem and to destroy the Holy City's history," it said.

The seizure of the two rooms in the church triggered considerable tension between Christians and Muslims. The incident occurred during renovation work at the mosque while the monk who was living in the rooms was abroad.

The Christian community, which closed ranks behind the Greek Orthodox, asked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Jerusalem City Hall to intervene to get the property back.

The Roman Catholic community even lodged a complaint with the Vatican, while the Greek Orthodox sent a complaint to Greece.

Franciscan Father Claudio Borotto said the Muslims had acted without provocation and that the Christians and Muslims had been on good terms.

The church is located between two mosques at the end of a stone path lined with minarets on the edge of the Muslim and Christian quarters of Jerusalem's Old City.

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO
15:35 French Programmes
16:00 Doc — The Global Family
16:25 Energy Express
16:50 Documentary
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Comedy — Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
20:00 Doc — World Echo
20:30 Medical Drama — Side Effects
21:10 Doc — Santitas
22:00 News in English
22:25 Series — One West Walkie
23:15 Series — Sisters

PRAYER TIMES

04:17 Fajr
05:43 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:32 Dhuhr
16:12 Asr
19:22 Maghreb
20:48 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweiffeth, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

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Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 77131
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 827126
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654922
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 81295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Min/Max. temp.
Amman.....08/18
Aqaba.....15/29
Deserts.....07/22
Jordan Valley.....15/28

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 21, Aqaba 32 Humidity readings: Amman 55 per cent, Aqaba 41 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Ghaleb Zawalidh736011
Dr. Jihad Sammour765018
Dr. Hisham Kan'ao790286
Dr. Khaldoun Asfour699440
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asena pharmacy637055
Nairoukh pharmacy623672
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945

vail with a chance of a gradual rise in temperatures. In Aqaba, it will moderate, cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre.....637111
Civil Defence Department.....661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue.....630341
Civil Defence Emergency.....199
Rescue Police (92, 621111, 637777).....617101
Fire Brigade.....843402
Blood Bank.....896390
Highway Police.....630321
Traffic Police.....605800
Public Security Dept.....661176
Hotel Complaints.....897467
Price Complaints.....787111
Amman Municipality Complaints.....630341
Telephone Information (directory assistance).....121
Overseas Calls.....010230
Central Amman Telephone.....623101
Repairs.....661101
Abdali Tel. Repairs.....773111
Jordan Television.....774111
Radio Jordan.....774111

Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Najih pharmacy847632
IBRID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir276852
Al Quds pharmacy1
ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad985550
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre81381332
Khalidi Maternity.....64428146
Akileh Maternity.....6424412
Jabal Amman Maternity.....642362
Malhas, J. Amman.....636140
Palestine, Shmeisani.....607071
Shmeisani Hospital.....669131
University Hospital.....845845
Al-Muasher Hospital.....6672279
The Islamic, Abdali.....66612637
Al-Ahli, Abdali.....6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen.....777101/3
Al-Bashir.....775111/26
Army, Marka.....891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital.....60224050
Anat Hospital.....674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery.....865199
ZARQA:
Govt. Hospital.....09983323
Zarqa National Hospital.....09900560
Ibn Sina Hospital.....09986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital.....09990990
IBRID:

Water Authority680100
J. Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Co.636381
RJ Flight Information08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08 (52700).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
09:35 Jeddah (RJ)
10:00 Aqaba (RJ)
10:10 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
10:30 Bombay (RJ)
10:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
11:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
11:40 Beirut (RJ)
18:00 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
18:00 Paris (RJ)

Princess Basma Hospital 18:10 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
Greek Catholic Hospital 18:50 London (RJ)
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital 19:10 Athens (RJ)
AQABA: 19:20 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
Princess Haya Hospital 20:40 Rome (RJ)
03314111 20:45 Vienna (RJ)
22:35 Frankfurt (RJ)
03314111 21:00 Paris, Aqaba (add) (RJ)
03:45 Cairo (RJ)
05:45 Rome (RJ)
05:45 Tunis (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Other Flights
12:00 Sanaa (Y)
12:00 Jeddah (SV)
13:35 Bahrain (GF)
15:20 Moscow (SU)
21:10 Beirut (ME)
21:35 Cairo (MS)
23:20 Istanbul (TK)
00:59 Cairo (MS)
02:15 London (BA)
07:20 London (BA)
07:20 Tel Aviv (LY)

12:35 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
13:20 London (RJ)
13:20 Athens (RJ)
19:40 Aqaba, Rome (add) (RJ)
20:25 Dubai, Bangkok, Osaka (add) (RJ)
21:15 Tunis (RJ)
21:15 New Delhi (RJ)
21:20 Jeddah (RJ)
22:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
23:00 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
23:40 Sanaa (RJ)
23:45 Cairo (RJ)
00:40 Bangkok (RJ)
02:30 Damascus (RJ)

OTHER FLIGHTS

13:30 Jeddah (SV)
13:30 Sanaa (Y)
14:25 Doha (GF)
16:35 Moscow (SU)
22:25 Cairo (MS)
00:45 Amsterdam (KL)
02:00 Cairo (MS)
07:00 Beirut (ME)
07:55 London (BA)
08:15 Tel Aviv (LY)

HILJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman8:00 am every Monday
Arr. Damascus5:00 pm every Monday
Dep. Damascus7:30 am every Sunday
Arr. Amman5:00 pm every Sunday

Princess Haya turns 23

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Haya Bint al Hussein celebrated her 23rd birthday Saturday.

The daughter of His Majesty King Hussein and the late Queen Alia, Princess Haya received her elementary education in Jordan and England then enrolled at Oxford University where she studied politics, economics and philosophy.

The princess has maintained a keen involvement in sports and is an accomplished member of Jordan's National Equestrian Team. She also plays basketball, soccer and haseball.

Her interests in health and social welfare issues committed her to her responsibilities as honorary president



of the Queen Alia Foundation for Hearing and Speech and of the Haya Cultural and Social Centre. She is also president of the Jordanian International

Athletes Cultural League.

Currently Princess Haya is involved in the establishment of the Bani Hashem Sports Complex in Amman.

Writers group chief states agenda

AMMAN (Petra) — The newly elected President of the Jordan Writers Association (JWA) has pledged to work towards solving the JWA membership's major problem, unemployment.

Speaking to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, one day after he was voted in as JWA president, Fakhri Kassar said that 490 association members were currently out of work.

Mr. Kassar, who is a columnist at Al Ra'i Arabic daily, is also president of the Union of Arab Writers.

On the JWA agenda, he said, is the important issue of reviving the association's role in literary work and activities and promoting its role among other like unions following years of retreat and weakness.

Although he thanked the government for its past support of writers, Mr. Kassar urged it to raise the JD 6,000 annual fund it provides, saying that the present fund is insufficient to cover the combined costs of rent for the association's offices in Irbid, Zarqa, Karak and Amman.

Stressing the need for increased funds from the government and other sources so that writers can concentrate on writing, Mr. Kassar said the association must stop begging or staging fund-raising campaigns to finance the publication of writers' books, pay the salary of a writer or purchase stationery.

Mr. Kassar added that the JWA plans to construct permanent premises in the Um Summaq area of Amman but funds for such a project are also urgently needed.

He said he also plans to reintroduce weekly seminars as part of the JWA's cultural activities.

Mr. Kassar was elected as president of the JWA on Friday along with a 10-member board of directors after clinching 67 votes against 64 won by his only rival, outgoing president Ibrahim Abul.

'Iran seeks joint commercial projects'

AMMAN (Petra) — Sayed Abul Hasan Khamoushi, assistant to the Iranian Minister of Industry, Saturday opened talks with Jordanian officials in Amman saying that Iran would like to conduct joint projects with Jordan in transport, construction and investment projects in Arab states.

Speaking at a meeting with Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Mohammad Smadi, Mr. Khamoushi said that Tehran seeks to expand and advance its relations with Amman, and that there are many areas for mutual cooperation.

Mr. Khamoushi, who is accompanied by an official delegation, told Dr. Smadi that the Iranian team's visit aims to prepare the ground for the higher Jordanian-Iranian Committee meeting due later this year.

The Iranian delegates to Saturday's meeting included representatives of large manufacturing industries, specialising in the construction of factories, electric power concerns, and automobile and railway locomotive manufacturers.

Mr. Khamoushi said that Iran is ready to accept Jordanian trainees in Iranian industries and send Iranian experts to organise training courses for personnel in Jordan.

Mr. Khamoushi and Dr. Smadi expressed their countries' desire to expand economic cooperation between them and agreed to organise a meeting by the Jordanian-Iranian Committee in October.

Describing Iranian-Jordanian relations as historic, Dr. Smadi said that there exist wide scopes for cooperation and economic integration, especially in the fertiliser industries based on potash and phosphate as well as vehicle manufacturing industries.

Also each has potential for cooperation in phosphoric acid production and can promote trade relations and cooperation in transport services, he added.

Dr. Smadi expressed Jordan's hope for opening further channels in relations between the private sectors in the two countries to highlight industrial products in the two nations. He said he hoped that the two sides will reach the stage at which they can conclude agreements on promoting transport and trade before the convening of the joint committee meeting later this year.

Police apprehend armed robbery suspects after downtown chase

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police on Friday night apprehended three armed men in connection with the shooting of a money exchanger and a police officer during a robbery in downtown Amman, Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi announced Saturday.

Officials said that three men (two Iraqis, and one Jordanian) entered a money exchange shop in downtown Amman and shot its owner, Subhi Haj Hassan, 42, in the shoulder.

According to the officials, the men stole JD 80,000 and some foreign currency and fled the shop, located on King Hussein Street. They drove away in a red Mercedes that was parked outside the shop, officials added.

They said that three police vehicles chased the

assailants for one hour through Amman streets.

Fire was exchanged, and one police officer, Second Lieutenant Abdul Karim Ghewiri, was injured in the process, the sources said.

The men surrendered near the Hashimiyeh Plaza, the source said, adding that they were using Iraqi-made handguns.

According to police officials, the three men, whom they would not identify, confessed Saturday that they had planned to rob a money exchange shop in Amman, "knowing that owners of these shops stayed late at night."

The officials described Friday's armed attack as a "rare" incident in the Kingdom.

Dr. Mutawi said after a Cabinet session that surgery was performed on Lt. Ghewiri for the removal of a bullet from his spinal cord and was reported in stable condition.

Road accidents claim 4 lives

In other incidents in the Kingdom, police reports said that four people, including a child, were killed in four different road accidents over the weekend.

In the Jordan Valley, a two-year-old child was killed after being run over by a pick-up truck driven by her father, police reports said.

The report said the child, Ala'a Hassan, was standing behind her father's pick-up truck, when the 29-year-old backed up without seeing his daughter. She was killed instantly.

The reports did not identify the victims or give the nature of the other incidents, but said that two of the three people reportedly killed during the weekend perished in run-over incidents.

Group reports 'slight improvement' in press freedoms, credits judiciary

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Human Rights Organisation (JHRO) Saturday said that it finds there has been a slight improvement in press freedoms in Jordan in the last 12 months but legal and political obstacles prevented such freedoms from being fully exercised.

In a statement issued to mark International Day of Press Freedom (May 3), the JHRO said that if the judiciary had not intervened in some cases, this improvement would have been minimal.

Citing examples of such intervention the statement provided the following:

The Supreme Court overruled a Cabinet decision that withheld consent to the publication of Al Mithaq Arabic weekly; the court acquitted Fahed Rimawi, editor of Al Majd weekly of charges that he harmed Jordan-Bahraini relations; the court declared Salameh Nematt, a correspondent for the London-based Al Hayat daily, innocent for publishing a report on Iraq's alleged infiltration into the Jordanian media institutions; and ruled against a law requiring journalists to reveal evidence or sources of their reports.

But the JHRO also cited restrictive measures including that Jordanian authorities last year prevented the editor of the Lebanese newspaper, Al Safer, from entering Jordan to take part

in a seminar on the media; the former minister of culture issued instructions that organisers of cultural activities should acquire prior approval for their activities; the governor of Balqa prevented the Islamic Action Front political party from organising a celebration to mark the Karamah battle; and the government prevented opposition parties and unions from holding two conferences to rally the public against normalisation with Israel.

According to the JHRO, the Kingdom is still plagued by concepts and ideas stemming from the old martial law era, and thus, citizens have no access to accurate information about the most dangerous issues affecting their own lives.

For instance, the statement said, Jordanians are ignorant of the actual rates of unemployment, the actual provisions and details of agreements being concluded with Israel, and about reports of Israelis buying Jordanian lands, or why official statements keep describing the economic situation as good while people continue to witness economic recession.

Withholding facts from citizens about important issues and citizens' rights and interests is causing genuine concern, especially as the central executive authority wields absolute

power over Jordan Radio and Television and controls a major equity in daily papers, the statement said.

It also referred to the Press and Publications Law as a "sword hanging over the heads of journalists" preventing them from exposing facts without due cause and justification.

The statement said that concern over the press and free expression will increase if the present situation persists, especially during the coming general elections, stressing that it is the people's right to have access to information.

The statement called for reforms that would give the public more freedoms as part of the democratic process.

It said that the government should:

1 - Allow different views to be expressed through television and radio without any restrictions;

2 - Sell its shares in the daily press;

3 - Amend the 1993 Press and Publications Law, particularly those provisions that refer journalists to court for trial;

4 - Speed up work on legislation that would allow private radio and television stations to operate as was promised by the government.

Italians grant scholarships to 5 textile instructors

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Italian Association of Textile Machinery Producers (ACIMIT) has granted five scholarships to Jordanian textile instructors, the Italian Trade Commission (ICE) in Amman announced on Saturday.

The scholarships will be officially awarded to the selected instructors during a ceremony to be held on Monday at the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC).

In a statement, the Head of ICE-Amman, Tala Shaban, said VTC Director General Ali Nasrallah, and Italian Ambassador Francesco Cerulli as well as ACIMIT Administration Board Member Paolo Banfi will attend the ceremony.

The ACIMIT initiative comes in the framework of a broader project aimed at stimulating technical cooperation and know-how exchanges between the Italian and Jordanian textile sectors.

The ICE statement said "a series of three technical publications, published by ACIMIT, has been distributed in the past months to various textile centres and vocational institutions in Jordan."

The booklets "aim to illustrate the Italian textile machinery and its technologies," the statement added.

The five selected instructors will have the opportunity to visit Italian textile industrial centres and will receive courses to enable them to "verify the quality and standards of Italian textile machinery," ICE statement concluded.

'Progressive' coalition will not be rushed, process requires scrutiny, says politician

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Objections on the individuals to consider and their "political behaviours" lay in the way of the establishment of a "progressive" coalition, a leading political figure said on Saturday.

The project of a "moderate-leftist" alliance is "on the table," the same source asserted, but its architects envisage it as a permanent entity, with objectives which go beyond mere electoral purposes, and do not intend to be rushed into it.

Observers see the idea of such a moderate-leftist alliance as a countermove to the announcement, in early March, of the merger of eight centrist parties in the National Constitutional Party (NCP).

The NCP's decision to field candidates in this autumn's parliamentary elections under a unified ticket was widely considered as a threat to other political groupings, including the Islamists and the leftists.

But it is not certain that the projected "progressive coalition" will be launched in time for the next general elections, and "there is no harmony among the parties discussing such a unified bloc," conceded former Prime Minister and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Taher Masri.

However, "the idea is on the table, and we have to

reach common denominators and mutual acceptance on the bodies and the individuals participating," he told the Jordan Times in an interview.

Declining to elaborate any further, he summed up the points of friction in the process to establish a "moderate" coalition as "individuals and political lines and behaviours."

"Nobody should claim that such an idea is materialised, and there are still objections on who should get in," he added.

A report published last week in the Arabic daily Al Dustour quoted leftist Zarga Deputy Bassam Haddadin as announcing the coalition as a "fait accompli."

Together with Mr. Masri, the envisaged progressive bloc is expected to include former Prime Minister Ahmad Obeidat and Secretary General of the pan-Arabist Al Mustaqbal Party Suleiman Arar, a source from the Jordanian Unionist Democratic Party (JUDP), which is also involved in the negotiations, told the Jordan Times in an earlier interview.

JUDP leader Issa Madanat is reportedly keeping close contacts with both Messrs. Masri and Obeidat, the same party source disclosed.

Confirming that these are the key-players in the realisation of the moderate-progressive alliance, Mr. Masri stressed that he is

working with Messrs. Obeidat and Arar for the establishment of a permanent alliance, with a broad and comprehensive political programme.

"Our target is not the elections, but a permanent alliance, and our objectives are too important for us to rush into anything."

If realised, the proposed "progressive" formation would fill the gap on the political arena between the strong Islamic opposition bloc on one side and the newly established centrist front on the other.

"After the consolidation of the eight centrist parties [in the NCP] and with the presence of a strong Islamic bloc [the Islamic Action Front, IAF], a lot of people feel the necessity of establishing a moderate bloc," Mr. Masri noted.

Suggesting that some politicians would be keen on rushing into a coalition with high-profile names such as those of Messrs. Masri and Obeidat, hoping to receive more votes in the next elections, Mr. Masri said "we should not accept [pressures], even if



Taher Masri

others want to rush us [into a coalition]."

Mr. Masri, who has been a member of the Lower House for 12 years, also announced his personal decision not to run in the 1997 elections, because of "the role parliament has played so far and [his] expectations on the even lower role the next parliament is going to play."

COLOURS

An exhibit of modern design items and home accessories from top European creators at the old Asfour Mansion, Shari' Othman Ben Affan, off Rainbow Street. From 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. & 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. until May 7

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

* Bani Hamida spring exhibition entitled "Crossing Borders" (displaying rugs, cushions, runners, and wallhangings) at the Jordan Contractors Association's Building, Deir Al Ghubur Tel. 658696, until May 18.

* Lithographs by Salam Kanaan at the Orient Gallery, Shmeisani (Tel. 681304) until May 13.

Press watchdog says 28 journalists killed in 1996

PARIS (Agencies) — Significantly fewer journalists were killed on the job in 1996, but the reporter's trade remains a dangerous one in many parts of the world, press watchdog group Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) said Saturday.

"Despite some good news, 1996 will probably not go down in history as a great year for press freedom," Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF — Reporters Without Borders) said in its annual report.

The report, released to mark the International Day of Press Freedom, Saturday, said the sharp drop in the number of deaths was due to a period of calm in Algeria, a peace agreement in the former Yugoslavia and a respite in the killing in the Great Lakes region of central Africa (See related story on page 3).

"A total of 28 (journalists) paid with their lives for their courage in exposing unacceptable behaviour by those with power," the report listed 20 other journalists whose deaths were under investigation and 64 more who were missing on Jan. 1, 1997.

The toll marks the second consecutive drop in journalist deaths after an especially deadly 1994, in which 103 journalists were killed because of their work.

At least 49 journalists were killed in 1995, 59 in 1993 and 61 in 1992, RSF said. Hundreds of journalists were arrested during

1996 and 93 were in prison worldwide on Jan. 1, 1997. But despite the drop in killings, RSF drew attention to the troubling lack of investigation of most journalist deaths.

"Hunting down journalists is becoming a risk-free activity, whether in Russia, Turkey or Latin America," the report said. "More often than not, the police do not even carry out a serious investigation."

Algeria, where Islamic fundamentalists have specifically targeted news people, remained the most dangerous place in the world for journalists. Eight lost their lives there in 1996, bringing the total number of reporters, editors and photographers killed since 1993 to 37. Three are missing and one is in jail.

RSF said another disturbing trend was the increase in legislation aiming to gag the media in countries calling themselves democracies.

"It is almost as if some heads of state wanted to bring back the old crime of lese majeste," the report said, pointing the finger at Africa in particular.

Only one murder of a journalist was reported in sub-Saharan Africa last year, down from five killed in 1995 and 77 in 1994. The situation in Latin America was varied, with Cuba, Mexico, Colombia and Guatemala singled out for criticism, but Peru praised for freeing three reporters.

The report slammed China as the "bastion of repression" in Asia. "The profusion of financial news emerging from Communist China as it moves towards a capitalist system cannot hide the lack of an independent general news press."

The situation in Europe and the former Soviet Union remained difficult, with the former Yugoslavia among the most disturbing, the report said.

The war in Chechnya claimed the lives of four journalists and four others are listed as missing. Turkey was censured for keeping in place "an arsenal of laws and regulations that severely restrict press freedom."

Four journalists were killed in Russia last year and two in Bangladesh, India and the Philippines. One journalist was killed on the job in Angola, Cambodia, Cyprus, Colombia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Ireland, Pakistan and Turkey.

Chosen for their ruthless campaigns of suppression of journalists, documented by CPJ worldwide, they were identified in conjunction with Saturday's World

Press Freedom Day. The enemies include Jiang Zemin of China, Fidel Castro of Cuba, Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus and Suharto of Indonesia. The heads of Albania, Sali Berisha; Belarus and Burma, Than Shwe, were cited in CPJ's annual ranking for the first time.

Antar Zoubari, the leader of Algeria's militant Armed Islamic Group (GIA) was named the worst of the enemies for the third year in a row.

"These 10 individuals are characterised by their relentless hostility to the very concept of a free and independent press in their own countries and around the world," said William A. Orme, Jr., CPJ's executive director. "They have deliberately engaged in hundreds of press freedom violations ranging from censorship, harassment and physical attack to imprisonment and even assassination."

Also included were Nigerian leader General Sani Abacha, Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, and Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

The Committee to Protect Journalists is an independent non-profit organisation that documents and responds to violations of press freedoms worldwide.

It is funded by private donations from journalists, news organisations and foundations; it does not accept government funding.

Meanwhile, the leaders of Albania, Burma (Myanmar), China, Cuba and Nigeria are among the world's 10 enemies of the press named today by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

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WORLD FLIGHT 1997: U.S. aviator Linda Finch poses in front of the 1935 Lockheed Electra 10E which she is flying around the world. Ms. Finch, who arrived in Singapore Saturday, is flying 24,500 miles around the world, similar to one that was attempted by pilot Amelia Earhart in 1937 before she vanished over the Pacific Ocean. Called World Flight 1997, this mission embarked upon aims to reach out to inner city and deprived children around the world. Ms. Finch is expected to complete the flight in mid-May when she returns to the same hangar in Oakland from which she and Amelia Earhart began their trips (Renter photo)

9 held as police probe attempt on Tajik president's life

DUSHANBE (AFP) — Police arrested nine people in northern Tajikistan Saturday suspected of involvement in the attempt on President Emomali Rakhmonov's life Wednesday, presidential spokesman Zafar Saidov said.

The arrests brought to 11 the total number of people held since the grenade attack in the northern town of Khodzhen, in which Mr. Rakhmonov suffered a shrapnel wound in one leg.

Two were arrested on the day of the attack, including the alleged assailant, 21-year-old Firdavs Dusboboyev, whom the authorities said had previously participated in opposition demonstrations.

Two people were killed and 70 wounded in the grenade explosion, which targeted Mr. Rakhmonov and his entourage as they were heading to a theatre in Khodzhen.

Mr. Rakhmonov is feeling well and will chair a government meeting Sunday, Mr. Saidov told reporters.

Health Minister Allakhon Akhmedov said Thursday Mr. Rakhmonov needed a week's rest and would have to undergo another operation on his leg.

Surgeons tried to remove the shrapnel late Wednesday, but without success. They decided to delay another operation until it was less painful for Mr. Rakhmonov, a source close to the authorities said.

Dushanbe Mayor Mahmud Saidov blamed the attack on supporters of Abdumalik Abdulladjanov, a businessman based in Khodzhen, who ran against Mr. Rakhmonov in presidential elections in November 1994.

A former clan chief in the agricultural south and later governor of the town of Kuliab, Mr. Rakhmonov, 44, and his supporters overbore a coalition of Islamists and democrats in December 1992, after a civil war that had left thousands dead and created one million refugees.

The assassination attempt was a further blow to stability in the impoverished ex-Soviet Central Asian republic, where government troops have continued battling Islamic rebels since Mr. Rakhmonov seized power.

Canadian city winning Red River siege as crest spills east

WINNIPEG (R) — Winnipeg Friday was winning the fight against the surging Red River as a massive ditch and miles of dikes withstood the onslaught of the river's crest, but floodwaters were not seen receding for five days.

"The fact it's going up and down shows how well the Red River can be controlled by the floodway. That tells us for now that we're winning the war," Winnipeg Emergency Management spokesman Terry Aseltine said.

Winnipeg's floodway is a 47-kilometre ditch that splits the Red River flood waters as they enter this city of 650,000. The floodway was built after a devastating 1950 flood forced 100,000 Winnipeg residents from their homes.

The Red River crested at 7.5 metres above winter ice level at downtown Winnipeg at 11 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time) Thursday and should hold at that level for about five days.

"The major concern is will the dikes be strong enough to hold," Mr. Aseltine said. "We won't be breathing easier for another five or six days," Mr. Aseltine said.

The Red River swelled to 22 times its normal flow last

month as record-breaking winter snow melted, flooding an area in Southern Manitoba twice the size of Hong Kong.

Floodwaters flanked the south-eastern edge of the city and swamped three homes and threatened 15 others in Grande Pointe, where up to 50 people struggled to battle fast-rising water.

"The military's going in to assist with sandbagging but at these levels, it's becoming dangerous," Manitoba Emergency Management Organisation spokeswoman Cindy Stevens said.

Civilian and military boats ferried sandbags to the community, which started losing the siege of the "Red Sea" early Friday. Local radio reports said 100 homes were flooded.

Sandbag dikes burst at two Winnipeg apartment buildings late Thursday, forcing 242 people from their homes, and breaks were reported at five homes just south of the city.

About 29,000 Canadians and 50,000 Americans have been displaced and four Canadians have died so far in the most extensive Red River flooding since 1852.

Manitoba flood victims received greetings Thursday from Britain's Queen Eliza-

beth, who is also Canada's head of state.

"I have read with dismay of the extensive floods in Manitoba," the queen wrote to Manitobans. "My thoughts are with everyone who has suffered, who is helping those made homeless, or who is battling to prevent further damage."

Winnipeg is also protected by a 40-kilometre dike southwest of the city that was completed Wednesday, but engineers worried the hastily built structure may not hold.

If so, Red River headwaters could reach Winnipeg in six hours with most of the water reaching downtown in 40 hours.

"It's obviously a much more positive day today," Winnipeg Mayor Susan Thompson said. "It's too early to say we've won because the crest will be in our city for four or five days."

"If the weather changes, we're right back into very high anxiety," Ms. Thompson added.

An additional inch of rain or strong south winds could raise river levels within the city or bring large waves crashing down on 240 kilometres of temporary sandbag dikes.

Armenians, Azeris swap PoWs from Karabakh conflict

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP) — Armenia and Azerbaijan exchanged 10 prisoners from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict Friday in another move aimed at breaking the deadlock in peace negotiations.

The exchange was made with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which assisted with simultaneous transfers in the former Soviet republics' capitals — Yerevan, Armenia, and Baku, Azerbaijan.

The prisoners were flown to freedom in Red Cross planes. Four of the men were Azerbaijanis and were freed by the authorities in the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh before being taken to Baku. The other six were Armenians who were released by Azerbaijan and flown to Yerevan.

In a statement issued in Geneva, the Red Cross welcomed the releases but urged all authorities to ensure that prisoners still held as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are freed.

It said the exchange, the fourth of its kind, brings the total number of people freed in the last month to 26. A truce signed in 1994 ended the war, which killed 15,000 people and turned about 1 million into refugees.

Recent efforts toward a political settlement suffered a setback due to border skirmishes in violation of a ceasefire. Another round of peace talks is scheduled to take place in the United States later this month.

Italy unveils plan to protect art treasures

ROME (R) — Italy has drawn up a master plan to protect its art treasures from theft and natural disaster and allocated \$549 million to restore Turin Cathedral, which was damaged by fire last month.

Culture Minister Walter Veltroni was quoted in newspapers Saturday as saying that the cabinet had agreed to invest 180 billion lire (\$100 million) in a "security plan" to protect Italy's vast artistic heritage.

He said Italy must "go beyond the culture of restoration to one of prevention and ordinary and systematic maintenance" of its art and archaeological treasures.

"This is a plan of integrated interventions that will help protect monuments from theft, damage, vandalism and, within the realm of the possible, natural disasters," Mr. Veltroni said, adding that 1,000 sites would be specifically targeted.

Features would include the installation of more smoke, fire and burglar alarms at museums and archaeological sites and courses for museum and site guards.

Italy has been fighting an uphill battle to protect its rich artistic inventory from depletion and destruction.

In the latest disaster to hit headlines, a fire last month raged through the Baroque Guarini Chapel at the back of Turin Cathedral which housed the famous Shroud

of Turin. The city's adjacent Royal Palace and more than 80 art works were also destroyed but firefighters managed to save the shroud, which many Roman Catholics believe wrapped the body of Christ after his crucifixion. Investigators are still trying to determine the cause of the blaze.

Mr. Veltroni said that of the 180 billion lire budgeted for the plan, 100 billion would go to the Turin reconstruction.

But some commentators said the plan, while an important step, must go further to halt the destruction and looting of Italy's artistic riches. "The sum allocated is a drop in the ocean if one considers" that the Culture

Ministry must oversee 3,500 churches, 2,100 archaeological sites, 4,000 castles, 30,000 archives, 100,000 churches, 1,500 convents and 4,000 historic gardens," the Turin daily La Stampa commented.

Mr. Veltroni said one of the main problems was the incomplete cataloguing of art works, which has facilitated theft.

Meanwhile, investigators are still trying to get to the bottom of the blaze that gutted Venice's famous Fenice Opera House last year and another that destroyed a historic theatre in the southern port of Bari that burned down in 1991. They suspect arson in both cases.

Kidnap-murder erodes Taiwan public confidence

TAIPEI (R) — The murder of a Taiwan actress's teenage daughter, whose body was found Monday, has left residents wondering if the government is capable of protecting them.

The murder and kidnaping 17-year-old, Pai Hsiao-Yen, daughter of popular actress Pai Ping-Ping, follows a spate of violence on the wealthy island, from gangland-style executions to the assassination of a government official.

Analysts said Tuesday the violence is eroding confidence in the government's ability to stem the recent rise in crime.

And fears have reacted the highest levels, with the wife of Premier Lien Chan telling the local daily China Times Express Tuesday she was afraid her children would be kidnapped.

Late Monday, police found the body of Pai Hsiao-Yen floating in a river in Taipei county. She was naked, her hands and legs bound by rope.

The teenager, also a daughter of the late Japa-

nese best-selling comic book artist Ikki Kajiwara, was kidnapped on April 14 on her way to school and had been dead for at least eight days, Coroner Yang Jih-Sing said. She had been strangled.

The kidnappers had chopped off half of the victim's left little finger, sent it to her mother and demanded a \$5 million ransom. Her mother had wanted to pay the ransom, but the kidnappers aborted a planned meeting.

The case has shocked the island nation of 21 million, with President Lee Teng-Hui saying he was "extremely saddened" and "outraged by the criminals' inhuman method," the presidential office said in a statement.

"Authorities had mobilised an unprecedentedly large number of police in this case, but they couldn't save the victim," said Chu Hai-Yuan, a sociology researcher at Academia Sinica.

He said the public has lost their confidence in the government's ability to maintain law and order.

"If the government has no power to tackle a security crisis, it should apologise to the public and leaders like the premier, interior minister and national police chief should step down," he said.

The sharp rise in crime includes the assassination of a local government official and seven others last November in a gang-style execution.

Several days later, a prominent opposition feminist went missing on her way to a party congress. Her naked body was found three days later with 35 knife wounds and she had apparently been sexually assaulted, police said.

Lee Ching-Tan, a law professor of Tunghai University, blamed Taiwan's notorious "black money politics," referring to infiltration of gangsters into local politics, as the cause of a rapid deterioration of law and order in Taiwan.

"Black money" has seriously polluted our politics and damaged our law and order," he said, adding the

government must eradicate such practice to "return the public the right to live without fear."

A recent opinion poll published by the United Daily News showed that 81 per cent of 800 residents interviewed often worried that they or their family members would be hurt or kidnapped by gangsters.

The same poll showed that 28 per cent of the respondents planned to emigrate.

Taiwan reported 156 kidnapping cases in 1996, the highest number since 1990, the state-run Central News Agency said.

Government statistics have also shown an average 15,000 Taiwan residents have emigrated in each of the past three years.

On Tuesday, Fang Yu, wife of Lien Chan, added her voice to growing fears over public safety.

"I knew it put pressure on my husband when I said that, but whenever my children came home a little late, I was very, very worried," she said.

Top Italian stylists Ferre, Krizia found guilty of graft

MILAN (R) — An Italian court found top stylists Gianfranco Ferre and Krizia and Gianni Versace's brother Santo guilty of corruption for paying bribes to tax police.

Ferre, Krizia, whose real name is Mariuccia Mandelli, and Santo Versace, who is business manager to his designer brother, were each given suspended sentences of one year and two months.

"We believe the verdict was unjust and we will certainly be appealing," Versace's lawyer Alberto Moro Visconti told reporters after presiding Judge Salvatore Capelleri announced the court's decision which took six hours of deliberation.

Lawyers for Krizia and Ferre said they would follow suit.

None of the defendants were in court in Italy's fashion capital for the climax of the long-running trial and officials at their company headquarters were not answering the telephones.

Prosecutor Elio Ramondini had asked for 17-month sentences for the three, who had argued they were the victims of rapacious tax officials and that they were forced to

hand over the cash.

The prosecution had alleged they paid money for easy audits. All three have already paid damages into the court roughly equivalent to the amount they paid to tax officials in 1990.

Court officials said Ferre handed over 340 million lire (\$198,000) and Versace 280 million lire (\$163,000) in bribes. They said Krizia paid \$260,000, which would have been equivalent to around 300 million lire at the time.

Corruption investigations into Milan's fashion elite were announced in autumn 1994 shortly before the unveiling of the designers' summer collections for 1995, shocking the city's smart set and casting a shadow over that year's shows.

The trial, which turned the spotlight on some of the most famous names in Italy's glittering fashion world, opened in September 1995.

It originally included Milan style guru Giorgio Armani, Krizia's husband Aldo Pinto and Gerolamo Etro, head of the Etro Design House as well as tax inspectors and industry executives.

Armani, Pinto and Etro all bowed out of the trial last year with plea bargains and suspended sentences after paying damages. Under Italian law, a defendant opting for a plea bargain does not have to admit guilt.

Armani said at the time he did not consider himself guilty but wanted to close a chapter that had upset him professionally. Ferre, Krizia and Santo Versace had said they wanted their trials to go ahead in order to clear their names.

The judges in Friday's trial will publish a full written account of their decision within 90 days. The style trial tarnished the fashion industry's glossy image as the "Tangentopoli" (bribeville) scandals which broke in the early 1990s spread to yet another sphere of Italian life. Magistrates in 1992 began exposing a sleazy web of corruption and cash-for-contracts scandals running right across politics and big business and their Tangentopoli investigations caused a revolution in Italy, toppling an entire ruling class.

Lebed sees Moscow mayor as sole presidential rival

MOSCOW (R) — Former security chief and would-be president Alexander Lebed said Saturday he believed he had only one serious rival for Russia's top job — Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov.

Both General Lebed, a popular reserve general sacked by President Boris Yeltsin last autumn for being too ambitious, and Mr. Luzhkov are seen as strong candidates in the next presidential contest, due in 2000.

Gen. Lebed told Interfax News Agency that he did not see newly-promoted reformer Boris Nemtsov as a significant contender for the presidency.

"I am very well disposed to B. Nemtsov, but am sure that he will not be able to build himself up for the elections," it quoted Gen. Lebed as saying.

The boyish, telegenic Nemtsov, 37, has become a key player in Mr. Yeltsin's team since a cabinet shake-up in March put pro-market liberals in overall charge of economic policy.

Mr. Nemtsov, seen by Mr. Yeltsin as a possible successor, is now a first deputy prime minister responsible for reforming Russia's cumbersome natural monopolies — gas, electricity, railways and telecommunications.

tions — and is also in charge of the energy sector.

Mr. Nemtsov has described his new responsibilities as something of a poisoned chalice as they will force him to take on powerful vested interests.

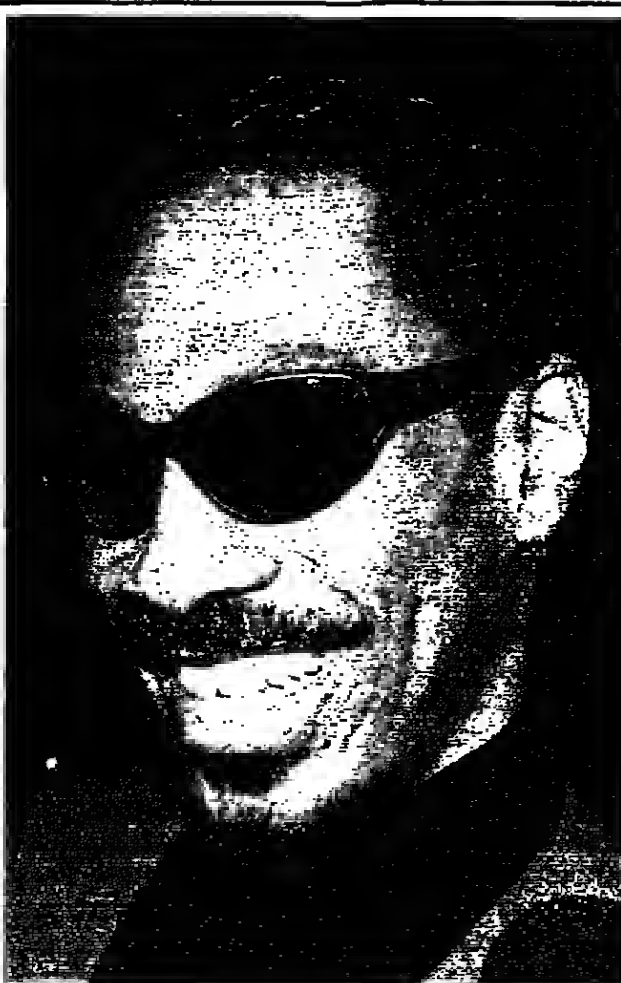
"Nemtsov is constantly getting framed and now he has nobody to rely on in the government," Gen. Lebed told Interfax.

But a poll carried by Interfax Saturday seemed to contradict Gen. Lebed's assessment of Mr. Nemtsov's chances.

The survey, conducted in mid-April among 1,500 people, showed Russians believed honesty and decency were the most important qualities of a president and that Mr. Nemtsov was the public figure most widely seen as possessing them.

Gen. Lebed ranked highest in the poll for strength of character and ability to take a matter to its conclusion, and Mr. Luzhkov was seen as the politician with the best organisational experience.

But Interfax said the survey also showed Russians believed none of their politicians knew where to lead the country.



Actor Eddie Murphy, star of the film, *The Nutty Professor*, is interviewed in this file photograph following the film's premiere. Murphy's vehicle was stopped by undercover sheriff's deputies early Friday in Los Angeles after he picked up a suspected transsexual prostitute, police said. Murphy was not detained in the incident but the prostitute, Aisone Seuli, 21, was arrested on an outstanding warrant (Reuter photo)

Eddie Murphy said he was giving hooker a ride home

LOS ANGELES (R) — Movie star Eddie Murphy's vehicle was stopped by undercover sheriff's deputies early Friday after the actor and stand-up comedian picked up a suspected transsexual prostitute, police said.

Deputy Mark Bailey said Aisone Seuli, 21, who was seen getting into Mr. Murphy's Land Cruiser on Santa Monica Blvd. at 4:45 a.m. (Pacific Daylight Time), was arrested on an outstanding prostitution warrant. Mr. Murphy, 36, who is married and has four young children, was not arrested.

"Mr. Murphy was apparently not involved in any criminal activity and was not detained," Mr. Bailey said. Mr. Seuli was described by Mr. Bailey as a transsexual, "someone who had undergone some sort of physical alteration — either surgical or with hormones," he said, without being specific.

The suspect was booked at the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station and transported to the Hollywood Municipal Court where he was arraigned and held on \$15,000 bail.

Murphy's publicist said it was an innocent mistake and in fact the actor had been trying to help someone he felt needed a lift home.

"Eddie was restless last night. He got up and drove to his favourite newsstand," said Paul Block. On the way home, he stopped at a red light and saw "a beautiful Hawaiian-looking woman approach his car," the publicist said.

"You're Eddie Murphy," the person said to him and Eddie replied "you shouldn't be out so late," Mr. Block said. He said Murphy thought the person looked tired "and he was concerned for her."

"She asked him for a ride home and Eddie did so, like he had helped people in the past," Mr. Block said, adding that earlier in the night Murphy told him he gave \$1,000 to a homeless person.

"Nothing happened at all, but Eddie said he will never do this again. However, he will continue to help homeless people," the publicist said.

Mr. Bailey said Murphy was seen by undercover officers picking up the suspect — a known prostitute — on Santa Monica Blvd. The deputies were carrying out a so-called "prostitution abatement" operation in the area which is known as a place to solicit homosexual sex.

The incident recalled the case of British movie star Hugh Grant, who was arrested on nearby Sunset Blvd. on June 27, 1995, for having sex with a female prostitute in a car. The hooker, Divine Brown, was charged with lewd conduct for giving the actor oral sex in his car. She was ordered to attend an AIDS awareness class and perform five days' community service. The judge sentenced her to 180 days in jail on two unconnected parole violations relating to prostitution.

Grant, who was in Los Angeles at the time to promote his movie *Nine Months*, pleaded no contest to a single charge of lewd conduct and was fined \$1,800 and ordered to take a course on the danger of AIDS.

Murphy, who rose to fame on the TV show *Saturday Night Live*, has starred in several movies including *Beverly Hills Cop*, *48 Hours*, *Trading Places*, *The Golden Child*, *Coming To America* and last year's box-office hit, *The Nutty Professor*.

French culture minister already targetted by his attacker — aide

LOURDES, France (AFP) — The assailant who seriously wounded French Culture Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy with a knife had already attacked the minister in 1992, said a spokeswoman Saturday.

Adnan Cifti, a 37-year-old Albanian with a history of mental illness, stabbed Mr. Douste-Blazy in the back Friday while the minister was on the election trail in his constituency.

Mr. Cifti had already attacked the minister with a screwdriver in May 1992 in the Lourdes Town Hall where Mr. Douste-Blazy is mayor.

"The man asked for seats in a show and ran after Mr. Douste-Blazy with a screwdriver before being over-

powered by a security officer and a receptionist," Marie-Helene Couderc, Mr. Douste-Blazy's chief of staff, told AFP.

"We knew this man was roaming the streets so we were careful when Douste-Blazy was at his office here. Unfortunately Lourdes attracts many cranks," she said.

Doctors in Toulouse, where the French deputy was transferred after initial emergency treatment in Lourdes, said Mr. Douste-Blazy, 44, was "perfectly conscious and in good form."

"He is not in danger and shows good signs, but the potential gravity of the wound requires constant surveillance in an intensive care unit," said Professor

Jean Berjaud, deputy head of the Chest Surgery Department at Purpan Hospital.

The minister suffered a broken rib in the attack and doctors were forced to drain a lung cavity which was also pierced.

Dr. Rene Rattig, head of the Toulouse University Hospital where the French deputy used to practise medicine, said Mr. Douste-Blazy had received a serious wound, requiring several days of hospitalisation and two weeks of rest, but it was not life-threatening.

Mr. Douste-Blazy was visited Saturday morning by his wife and father, both also doctors.

Mr. Cifti attacked Mr. Douste-Blazy while the

minister was talking to a shopkeeper in a souvenir shop. The shopkeeper ran out after the attacker shouting "stop him! He's stabbed Douste-Blazy!" and local residents gave chase.

The attacker was arrested shortly afterwards while drinking a mint cordial in a nearby bar.

Mr. Cifti was incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital after the first incident and released in September 1996.

The attack meant Mr. Douste-Blazy would not be fit enough to open the 50th Cannes Film Festival Thursday, the Culture Ministry said in a statement in Paris.

5 more killed in Pakistan sectarian turmoil

LAHORE, Pakistan (AFP) — Four gunmen riding on motorbikes killed five people early Saturday in Pakistan's central province of Punjab, killing the prayer leader and injuring three people, police said.

In the third incident another prayer leader was shot dead in a different mosque in Lahore, but police said he was killed by his own brother, who was a mental patient.

Police said a total of four people were injured in the shootings and hospitalised, two in a "serious" condition.

The hit-and-run assaults came despite stepped-up security measures and talks by the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif with leaders from SSP and Shite political party, Tehrik-i-Jafria Pakistan (TJP).

Provincial government chief, Shabaz Sharif, the prime minister's brother, has held separate meetings here with representatives of the two groups and officials said joint SSP-TJP talks with him were scheduled for Monday.

Pullion-riding on motorbikes has been banned throughout the province in a bid to stem the violence and army has been alerted for possible deployment during the Islamic month of Muharram due to start Thursday.

Shite Muslims carry out processions during the month as part of annual rituals to mourn the 7th century martyrdom in Iraq of Imam Hussain, grandson of the Prophet Mohammad.

A senior police official said "extraordinary" security measures including police reinforcements, extensive patrols and strict vigilance along the routes of processions were being taken for the "critical" period ahead.

Special security arrangements would be put in force around mosques and meeting places in sensitive areas throughout Punjab, he said.

In January a bomb blast killed an SSP leader and 25 other people in Lahore and in February eight people, including an Iranian diplomat, died in an attack on Iranian Cultural Centre in Multan city.

Ten people were killed in Khairpur Tamewali town near Multan earlier this month in firing by gunmen in a market, killing mostly Shite shopkeepers.

Police claim to have arrested several suspects involved in what is termed by newspapers "sectarian terrorism" — a serious law and order challenge for Mr. Sharif's newly elected government.

Mr. Sharif has vowed "stern action against people fighting in the name of religion."

White House seeks to keep Mrs. Clinton's notes secret

WASHINGTON (AP) — While declaring its full cooperation, the White House waged a battle to keep nine sets of notes involving Hillary Rodham Clinton away from White-water prosecutors, a court ruling unsealed Friday shows.

The high-stakes dispute is heading to the Supreme Court.

President Bill Clinton has authorised challenging a federal appeals court decision ordering the surrender of two of the nine sets of notes, White House Counsel Charles F.C. Ruff announced.

The two sets involve Mrs. Clinton's conversations with White House lawyers concerning her actions following the death of former deputy counsel Vincent Foster and the mysterious reappearance of Mrs. Clinton's law firm billing records — two key focuses of the Whitewater investigation.

The first conversation occurred July 11, 1995, among Mrs. Clinton, White House lawyers Jane Sherman and Miriam Nemetz, and Mrs. Clinton's personal attorney, David Kendall. At the time, Mrs. Clinton was preparing to be questioned by the office of Whitewater Prosecutor Kenneth Starr,

who was delving into the handling of Whitewater-related records from Foster's White House office after his death.

Mrs. Clinton's other conversations with White House attorneys occurred on Jan. 26, 1996, during breaks in and following Mrs. Clinton's federal grand jury testimony about the billing records outlining her work for the failing Arkansas savings and loan at the centre of the Whitewater probe.

The Appeals Court panel in St. Louis, by a 2-1 vote, rejected claims by the White House and Mrs. Clinton that her conversations with presidential lawyers were protected by attorney-client privilege.

"An official who fears he or she may have violated the criminal law and wishes to speak with an attorney in confidence should speak with a private attorney, not a government attorney," said the ruling, which was made last month but unsealed Friday.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit, based in St. Louis, held that Mrs. Clinton's Whitewater conversations with government lawyers could not be withheld from a federal grand jury, even if her private lawyer was present. If Mrs.

Clinton expected attorney-client confidentiality, she should have held the discussions solely in the presence of her private lawyers, it said.

The two sets of notes that were taken by the White House lawyers are among nine sets involving Mrs. Clinton subpoenaed by Whitewater prosecutors last June 21.

The other seven sets are lawyers' notes of Mrs. Clinton's interviews with Whitewater prosecutors on June 12, 1994; April 22, 1995; and July 22, 1995.

In the past, Clinton has pledged to "cooperate fully" with the Whitewater investigators.

In 1994, White House Counsel Lloyd Cutler said the Clintons would comply with investigators' requests for documents, unless they contained matter pertaining to national security.

Mr. Starr applauded the ruling, saying the White House had made "unprecedented" arguments in an effort to "withhold relevant information from the federal grand jury."

"The court's decision reinforces a bedrock principle that we have been articulating for over two years in discussions with the White House: White House attorneys are government attorneys, not private attorneys," Mr. Starr said.

In court documents, both sides referred to the landmark Watergate court decision banded down after President Richard Nixon invoked executive privilege to avoid turning over incriminating tape recordings to prosecutors. The Supreme Court ordered the Nixon White House to turn over the tapes.

Mr. Starr argued that the Supreme Court's Nixon decision means that attorney-client privilege does "not authorise withholding relevant information from the federal criminal process." The White House said the Nixon case turned on issues other than attorney-client privilege.

The White House said that Mr. Starr's subpoena of the lawyers' notes is "a shot across the bow" designed to open the door to gaining volumes of privileged material from inside the White House counsel's office.

"The office of the president ... could hardly have been expected to roll over," said the White House brief filed in the appeals court case.

Former governor says he did not give away Hong Kong — paper

HONG KONG (R) — Former Hong Kong governor, Lord Murray Maclehoze has denied he pushed the issue of the colony's return to China during a 1979 meeting with late Chinese paramount leader Deng Xiaoping.

Mr. Maclehoze, who was governor from 1971 to 1982, told the English-language South China Morning Post in an interview in its Saturday edition he did not encourage China to take a tough stance over the end of Hong Kong's rural new territories lease.

A number of authors have claimed that Mr. Maclehoze, by unexpectedly raising the issue of the territory's handover at the meeting, forced Beijing's hand over Hong Kong's reversion.

"The funny thing was that it wasn't me who mentioned (it) first, it was Deng Xiaoping," he said. "It is nonsense to think it was something you could just ignore. It had to be raised some time, I was going to raise it."

Mr. Deng had not been told the subject would be discussed.

China ceded Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon peninsula to Britain in 1842 and 1860 after going to war over the opium trade. In 1988, Beijing also leased the new territories and 235 outlying islands to Britain for 99 years, an agreement that expires this July 1.

After the Maclehoze visit in April 1979, then British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher visited the Chinese capital in September the same year, and Mr. Deng refused London's request for continued British administration of Hong Kong after 1997.

In 1983, Britain and China began negotiations on Hong Kong's future. A year later Lady Thatcher and China's then Premier Zhao Ziyang signed an agreement requiring London to transfer sovereignty of the colony to China at midnight on June 30, 1997.

China has promised the territory of 6.4 million people that they can keep their economic and political way of life for 50 years after the July 1 handover.

Swiss kept billions in looted Nazi gold, U.S. report says

NEW YORK (R) — A long-awaited U.S. government report will state there is conclusive evidence that the Nazis sold Switzerland gold stolen from individual Holocaust victims, sources close to the State Department said.

The sources said the 11-agency report will also show that after the war, Switzerland failed to return billions of dollars worth of looted Nazi gold it received during the war. The sources' comments were denounced by the U.S. official preparing the report.

Under-Secretary of Commerce Stuart Eizenstat, in a statement issued by the embassy of Switzerland in Washington, said the sources' comments reported earlier Friday by Reuters were inaccurate. The sources contacted by Reuters said they stood by their account.

"The Reuters story is based on pure speculation, (it) contains inaccuracies and should be given no credence," the statement by Mr. Eizenstat to the embassy said. Mr. Eizenstat did not specify what the inaccuracies were but he cautioned that in the coming days interested parties would attempt to put their own slant on the report. The Swiss embassy declined comment.

The more than 200-page report, based on 14 million pages of U.S. government documents, was prepared under Mr. Eizenstat's direction. It is expected to be released next Wednesday, and the sources said it will be very harsh on the

Swiss role in the war as bankers and even money-launderers for the Third Reich.

The report, however, will not make any recommendations as to whether the United States should reopen a 1946 treaty with Switzerland in which the Swiss agreed to return \$58 million of the Nazi gold received during the war. Documents in the report will show that the Swiss took in \$425 million in looted gold — worth more than \$4.25 billion by today's prices.

Sources who have read the report told Reuters it will contain proof that Germany not only sent Switzerland gold looted from the national treasuries of the countries it occupied, but also gold taken by the Nazi SS as loot from individual victims, something that the Swiss National Bank has previously denied as late as a month ago.

The SS looted personal jewelry, watches, rings and even the gold dental fillings of their victims, many of them Jews herded into notorious death camps like Auschwitz.

The gold from the camps was then sent to the German Central Bank where it was remelted. Some of the items arriving at the Reichsbank bore the stamp Auschwitz as well as the names of other concentration camps, U.S. archival documents said.

The sources told Reuters that investigators had found the smelting records of gold sold to Switzerland by the Nazis

and it showed conclusively that victim gold was mixed in with bank gold.

Documents to be appended to the report show that after the war, Switzerland returned to the allies only about 15 per cent of the looted gold it bought from Germany in return for Swiss francs, which were used to buy war materials and food.

According to documents, including some previously released ones, Switzerland knowingly received looted gold and in certain cases even asked the Germans to obtain it for them.

Documents also showed that Swiss commercial banks as well as the National Bank received the looted gold.

A World Jewish Congress (WJC) official said that while he had not seen the report, he could confirm that documents the group had submitted to the U.S. government also showed that victim gold was sent for processing to the Reichsbank.

"One document revealed that 76 shipments of looted gold, including dental gold, were sent to the German Central Bank valued at more than \$150 million today and some of the items even bore the stamp Auschwitz," Eitan Steinberg, WJC executive director, said.

Meanwhile, sources close to the U.S. State Department said other documents showed that victim gold wound up in the gold pool of the commission set up by the allies after the

war to return the looted metal to its rightful owners.

The allied-established tripartite Gold Commission also has long maintained that all the captured Nazi gold in its holdings were from the Banks of Europe and none came from individuals. The distinction is important because all of the \$4 billion worth of gold it has distributed went to central banks and not one ounce went to Holocaust survivors.

The commission has distributed all but 5.3 tonnes of some 377 tonnes it received from Britain, France and the United States. Most of the captured gold was located in hiding places in Germany and Austria while some of it was handed over by the Swiss and the other neutral countries who did business with the Nazis during the war. The WJC has called on the commission to use the remaining gold for the benefit of Holocaust victims.

The sources said the report will also document that other neutral countries during the war — Sweden, Spain, Portugal and Turkey — received looted Nazi gold but returned only a tiny fraction after the war.

Mr. Steinberg said, "We are confident this report underscores the continuing commitment of the Clinton administration to secure justice for Holocaust victims. Special praise must be accorded to Ambassador Eizenstat and to Attorney General Janet Reno's Nazi hunting unit for their extraordinary efforts in this investigation."

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Bridge for the future

THE INAUGURATION of the Nippon-Jordan Fertiliser Company plant in Aqaba yesterday is a fine example of cooperation between a first grade industrial nation and a developing country. It also is a testimony of the trust that Japan has in Jordan as a stable and economically-viable country.

Like Jordan, Japan has very scarce natural resources. But thanks to a very educated and industrious population it has amassed great wealth and in the last two decades became one of the major international aid donors. Jordan especially benefitted from this wise and generous Japanese policy. The exemplary relationship that developed between the two countries, thanks to the efforts of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, is one that needs to be emulated by other developed and developing nations. World stability and peace depend to a great extent on narrowing the gap between the nations of the North and South, the haves and the have-nots. What our friends in Japan, and also Europe, are doing is just that: putting soft security ahead of hard security.

Jordan still hopes to benefit further from its relations with Japan. The Japanese experiment, especially in the basic field of education and further in industrialisation, has been copied by other Asian countries, the so-called Asian tigers. Jordan, which so far explored relations with the Asian giant on the macro level, needs to enhance these relations on the micro level. Much needs to be studied about the Japanese experience here in Jordan especially by our institutions of higher education.

Not only should we aim at importing Japanese technology and know-how. We need to study the basics of Japan's success story. Education is one of the secrets of Japan's and the Asian tigers' success story. Especially so since the Japanese managed to produce an educational system that while preserving the country's cultural heritage ensured the continuation of its industrial revolution and propelled it to the top of the 20th century technological nations.

Aqaba's \$85 million project that will provide Jordan with a \$60 million annual income from sales in the Japanese market is not only a commercial venture. It is a bridge between the two peoples, on which more similar projects will be built providing for stronger ties between the two nations.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i Saturday expressed optimism that the new Labour government in Britain will adopt a more balanced and reasonable policy towards the Middle East. Since the mid 1980s, the Labour Party has switched its stand from full backing of Israel, due to its special relationship with the Israeli Labour Party, to a more moderate stand, reflecting the party's understanding of the Arab rights, according to Mahmoud Rimawi. The writer noted that the British Labour Party is more convinced now of the need for the creation of a Palestinian state and is more oriented towards supporting the European Union's Middle Eastern position, which opposes Israel's illegal practices. Noting that it was a Labour government which had drafted the U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967, calling on Israel to give up the occupied territories, the writer said the new Labour government in Britain is expected to do something towards ensuring the implementation of that particular resolution. He said the Arabs hope that the new government in London will help put an end to Israel's expansionist policies.

A WRITER for Al Ra'i discussed the public administration's situation in light of the ongoing criticism in the media of the weakness with which this administration has been plagued for years. Fahed Fanek said that the ongoing campaign against the public administration system, which is accused of corruption and inefficiency, and the drumming up of the idea of laying off civil workers would not yield positive results. What we are hearing from the government is a repeated denial that the bloated administration will be downsized and that a great number of employees will be retired, said the writer. The media campaign against the public administration has yielded a negative result and is reducing the morale of the civil servants and shaking their confidence and their belief in their present jobs' security, said the writer. He said that the media launched its attack and criticism at the public administration for political reasons and not for the sake of helping the government to carry out the reform. Any reform to the administration system, he said, cannot and should not be conducted through television or the press but through quiet administrative procedures.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Zero inflation foreseen for 1997

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

OUR CRITICS used to complain that prices were going up sharply and inflation was getting out of control, which reduced the purchasing power of the consumers. The Consumers Protection Society (CPS) is a leader in this effort, which sits nicely with our culture of complaining.

I am afraid that the real picture now is exactly the opposite. Complaints from now on should concentrate on the depressed prices and the consequent reduction in the producers' purchasing power, especially farmers, who also complain that they are losing heavily.

The cost of living index in Jordan started to decline persistently, as of last September the month that followed the raising of bread prices by some 150 per cent. The index for August 1996 stood at 117.8. After full six months, i.e. in February 1997, the index stood at 117.6. In fact, the price level in February 1997 was a little bit below that of the same month of 1996. In other words, we witness a deflation, instead of the expected inflation, something that happens in Jordan for the first time in recent years.

The quoted figure of inflation in 1996, which is 6.5 per cent, is misleading. It represents the average indices for the 12 months of 1996, in comparison with the average index for the 12 months of 1995. It is influenced by the behaviour of inflation in the previous year. This way of

calculating inflation may be suitable for adjusting the figures of the gross domestic product (GDP) of a certain year with the figures of the previous year, as the annual production is spread over the 12 months, but it is not acceptable to calculate the price change which took place over 12 months, i.e., December to December.

If we compare the cost-of-living index in December 1996 with the corresponding figure of December 1995, we shall find the inflation during 1996 did not exceed 2.5 per cent, which is less than the rise caused by removing the subsidy of bread and other derivatives of wheat. Had it not been for the subsidy removal, inflation rate in 1996 would have been zero or negative.

As a matter of fact, inflation rate in 1996, based on wholesale prices in Amman, showed a rise of 2 per cent or 3.2 per cent, depending on whether we compare the average of four quarters of 1996 with the average of four quarters of 1995, or compare the index in the 4th quarter of 1996 with the same quarter of 1995.

In their assessment, the experts of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast inflation in 1997 to be in the order of 4 per cent. However, I beg to differ. I claim that inflation in Jordan in 1997 will be either negative or close to zero.

I have three reasons to support this claim. The first reason is the slowdown in the market, whether real or perceived, which suppresses demand and prices. The second is the stronger Jordanian dollar, which rose on average by 9.6 per cent against major currencies due to pegging the dinar to the strong dollar; this reduced the cost of imports, on consumption and capital formation. The third reason is the tough monetary policy adopted by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), namely raising interest rates and draining liquidity from the banking system through selling Certificates of Deposits (CDs) to commercial and investment banks.

In accordance with this logic, more reduction in prices is expected despite the price liberalisation of more commodities by the Ministry of Supply. Moreover, prices of real estate are expected to plummet soon, due to the same reasons that caused lower prices of shares in the Amman Financial Market (AFM).

With inflation expected at around zero and interest rate or credit at around 16 per cent, the real interest rate in Jordan could be the highest in any country and may be the highest on record. Considerable results are therefore inevitable.

'Army's secularism losing the battle for the hearts and minds of young Turks'

By G. H. Jansen

THE BEST that can be said of the campaign for "secularism" that is presently being waged by the Turkish army against the Islamic Welfare Party of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan is that the campaign is bound to fail.

The salient facts in this struggle are that the Turks are a Muslim people, strongly, deeply and devoutly so. And Turkey is a Muslim country. That being the basic background, the attempt by the army to ignore this and set it aside is, by itself, proof of just how silly and shallow, how alien to Turkey, is the thinking of the officer corps of the Turkish armed forces which proudly pro-

claims itself the protector of the national legacy of Atatürkism, that is of the ideas that inspired the efforts of Kemal Atatürk to make Ottoman Turkey into a modern state. That is a modern European state.

Atatürk was a fine soldier but a superficial reformer as is revealed by the fact that one of his basic ideas was "laicism," presently translated as "secularism," the separation of religion of Islam from education along with which went the change-over of the script in which Turkish is read and written from the Arabic alphabet of the Koran to the "Roman" of Europe.

Clear proof that non-indigenous "secularism," which in Atatürk's Turkey took a strongly anti-

Islamic form, would not "take" in Turkish soil was provided because the army, in defence of its secularism, has had to carry out no less than three coups since 1960 — once every 12 years. It is said that a fourth coup is in the offing. This means that the Turkish army, using its armed strength, has had to drag Turkey back to secularism and away from Islam four times in the past half century.

The army's secularism has lost the battle for the hearts and minds of young Turks. This is the opposite of the transformation achieved by Atatürk in the 1920s. This is why the army has placed special emphasis on the point, in its 18-point programme of

reform which the Erbakan government has been ordered to implement, that the state would de-Islamise the school system where Islamic ideas have been more popular and effective than those of secular Atatürkism. Why this should be so would be a profitable subject for religion-sociological research rather than why the army feels the need to carry out secularist coups from time to time.

The Turkish army's attempt to de-Islamise the core and substance of public life in Turkey is as vain and foolish as it would be if some authority were to order the Greek people and Greek Cypriots to opt out of Orthodox Christianity, the Burmese people of

Buddhism, Indians of Hinduism, or Israelis of Judaism. It cannot be done and so it should be abandoned.

The West favours the Turkish army's attempts to impose secularism on the unwilling Turkish people because in the West, where faith is more than half dead, it is axiomatic that secularism is "a good thing" while the admixture of politics with faith is "a bad thing" (especially if that faith is Islam).

While in the West even theologians argue that "God is dead," in the East, and especially in Dar Al Islam, the masses assert very loudly that "God is Great!" The pseudo-European in Turkey do not seem to be aware either

of this dramatic difference or of its significance.

It is difficult for non-Turks to understand the idolatrous attitude of the Westernised Turks towards Atatürk, the father of the Turkish Nation, who had few of the attributes of a National Father and who is always portrayed in official portraits clad in white tie and tails. After all, he drank himself to death, aided and abetted by notorious sexual excesses. Little wonder that there are iconoclastic waves of anti-Atatürk feelings — one of which is presently surging — when his statues are attacked and busts of him are decapitated, as was the case in the campaign waged by the Tajani Tarika in the 1960s.

Israel and Turkey — the Mideast's new friendship

By Stephen Kinzer

ISTANBUL — When the fiery Islamic police chief Necmettin Erbakan took office as prime minister of Turkey last June, it was logical to expect that he would tone down his passionate denunciations of "Zionist imperialism" and stop calling for a jihad to liberate Jerusalem. But few expected to see him sitting down for a friendly chat with the Israeli foreign minister.

That improbable meeting took place early this month at the Foreign Ministry in Ankara. True to form, a group of protesters assembled in Istanbul to burn an Israeli flag and declare the visiting dignitary, David Levy, "persona non grata." What was remarkable was not the protest, but the fact that Mr. Erbakan, who a year ago might have led it, was now its target.

During his visit, Mr. Levy met with several high-ranking Turkish officials in addition to Prime Minister Erbakan, discussing civilian cooperation and ways to increase trade. But undoubtedly his most substantive

meeting was with the chief of the Turkish general staff, Gen. Ismail Hakkı Karadayi. They reviewed the rapidly expanding Turkish-Israeli security relationship and agreed to deepen it.

Over the last two years, Turkey and Israel have quietly forged a remarkable programme of military cooperation. In the process, they have created what is now the most powerful military friendship in the Middle East. The relationship is continuing to improve, improving the security of both countries even as relations between Israel and the Palestinians deteriorate, and as the entire region faces the rise of fundamentalist Islamic movements.

In particular, the relationship can only make Israeli leaders more confident that they can take tough positions in dealing with their Arab neighbours. An alliance with Turkey could go a long way towards neutralising Syria in any major crisis. It could also make Syria think twice about stirring up trouble in Israel's north, however preoccupied Israel may be with quelling

unrest among the Palestinians.

Solidarity between Turks and Jews stems in part from their common history of conflict with Arabs. Turks ruled much of Arabia until early in this century, when their rule was overthrown in a series of British-backed rebellions. Israel has lived its whole national life in conflict with some or all of its Arab neighbours. Today both countries count Syria and Iraq, together with Iran, as threats to their security.

Turkey's military planners portray their country as caught inside a "Bermuda Triangle" of chaos, with the Middle East on one side, the Caucasus on another, the Balkans, including their traditional rival Greece, on the third. Like the Israelis, they feel the need for a strong friend nearby.

These cold strategic calculations are the basis for a growing military relationship. Israeli technicians are now directing a \$600 million programme to modernise Turkish fighter jets. Israeli pilots are practising manoeuvres in Turkey's vast airspace

— and, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, are "almost certainly" flying reconnaissance missions aimed at nearby countries like Syria and Iraq. Turkish and Israeli cadets and officers attend each other's military academies. Naval units hold manoeuvres off each other's coasts.

Some analysts predicted that these arrangements would collapse after Prime Minister Erbakan took office last year. If Mr. Erbakan had remained faithful to the oratory he used during his 30 years in opposition, they might have. But after he made some anti-Israeli statements early in his term, the Turkish military, which views itself as the country's long-term guardian above and beyond politics, stepped in. Publicly and privately, commanders lectured Mr. Erbakan on the security value of Turkish-Israeli ties. To show the world that they had persuaded him, the senior commander, General Karadayi, flew to Tel Aviv in February and pledged faithful friendship. "Turkey will not

share your military information with others," he told the Israelis, "nor will we pass your military technology to other nations."

Not surprisingly, nearby countries have been sharply critical of Turkey. In February leaders of Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia issued a joint appeal urging Turkey to reconsider. Iran and Greece also complained. The Turkish Foreign Ministry responded tartly that the wave of protest "does not concern us at all."

Welding pincers

If this new alliance has a principal target, it is Syria, which borders both Turkey and Israel and harbours longstanding grievances against both. Suddenly it finds itself facing a powerful alliance with pincers on its northern and western borders. It can no longer think of confronting either country without worrying about retaliation from the other.

The alliance also alters the Greek-Turkish balance. Greece and Syria maintain good ties based on their

shared antagonism to Turkey, and Greek strategic planners have long assumed that if Greece and Turkey were to face off in the Aegean, they could count on Syria to mobilise its army and keep many Turkish troops tied down in the southeast. Under the new power constellation, Syria could not do so without expecting counter-pressure from Israel.

Most Turks, with the exception of pan-Islamists in Prime Minister Erbakan's party, seem to support their country's embrace of Israel. Despite widespread anger here at Israel's treatment of Palestinians, they believe that the friendship is in their national interest. Evidently Mr. Erbakan agrees, which suggests that his Turkish nationalism is stronger than his Islamic militancy. He is also bowing to a reality of Turkish political life that has remained unchanged since the founding of the Republic 74 years ago: in important security questions, the military makes key decisions and the government follows.

The New York Times

Made by the CIA: Mobutu and other disasters

By Anthony Lewis

WASHINGTON — What responsibility should we Americans feel when our government, for policy reasons, imposes on another country a regime that reduces it to misery?

The decline and anticipated fall of President Mobutu Sese Seko should make us reflect on that question. For we invented the Zairian dictator, supported his corrupt regime for decades and filled his pockets with dollars.

The Central Intelligence Agency made Marshall Mobutu its man after the Congo (as it was then called) became independent in 1960. It backed him when he carried out a coup in 1965 and made himself president.

Over the next 30 years, the United States supplied more than \$1.5 billion in economic and military aid to Zaire. Much of it was siphoned away by Marshall Mobutu in Swiss banks, or used to buy chateaux in Europe.

Zaire was left to decay into the chaos portrayed by V.S. Naipaul in his novel "A Bend in the River."

CIA officials and other Americans who dealt with Marshall Mobutu were under no illusions about him. In their view, we had to support him because he was an anti-Communist bulwark in the cold war. As Franklin Roosevelt said in another context, he was an SOB, but he was our SOB.

In the 1970s, we enlisted Marshall Mobutu in a particular cold war adventure: the arming of Jonas Savimbi, the Angolan rebel leader, in his attempt to overthrow the leftist government

of Angola. The CIA got arms to southern Zaire, and from there to the Savimbi forces. The Angola caper gave Marshall Mobutu added leverage with his American backers. If they wanted to keep the Angolan rebels in the field, he would say, they had to line his pockets.

More than once the United States had the chance to press Marshall Mobutu for reform — and fumbled it. In 1978, when we helped him put down a rebellion in Shaba Province, we could have called for democratisation but did not. In 1991, after an army mutiny, a Bush administration committee recommended pressing Marshall Mobutu to retire, but the idea was quashed.

Zaire is not the only example of U.S. governments using the CIA to reshape the politics of another country, indifferent to the cruelties imposed on the people of that country. Guatemala is another, perhaps equally outrageous from the viewpoint of international law and human values.

In 1954, a military coup sponsored by the CIA overthrew the left-wing government of President Jacobo Arbenz, one of the few in Guatemala's history that had been freely elected. The coup began a long national descent into savagery.

In the 1980s, Guatemalan military forces carried out a relentless campaign against rebels among the Indians who make up a majority of the country's population. The military strategy was to destroy villages deemed sympathetic to the rebels. In the end, 140,000 people were killed or missing and one million displaced from their villages.

Many Guatemalan military and political leaders were on the CIA payroll. Last year, the Intelligence Oversight Board found that the CIA had paid a number of military officers suspected of assassinations, kidnapping and torture.

The Guatemalan civil war was finally brought to an end by a peace agreement signed last December. Other civil wars have ended in El Salvador and Nicaragua, where the CIA was even more deeply engaged.

A few months ago, the CIA made public training manuals it had used with at least five Latin American security forces in the early 1980s. The manuals featured techniques of psychological coercion to make people talk — techniques that the agency said it gave up in 1985.

In all these activities the CIA has not been a rogue elephant. It has been carrying out the wishes of the highest American authorities.

But the existence of the CIA, operating in secret, allowed those authorities to act as if they knew nothing of the torments inflicted on other people in what we deemed to be our interest.

"Mobutism is about to become a creature of history," Mike McCurry, the White House spokesman, said on April 9, was around when a presidential spokesman says: "CIA corruption of other countries' politics is a creature of history."

The New York Times

Nelson Mandela — 'personal achievement is for me a collective effort'

The president of South Africa wakes up every day at 6:30 a.m. and works until late at night. In the interview he granted in Capetown, during the progress of discussions with Zairian rebel leader Laurent Kabila, he said: "I joined this group of men and women (ANC), in whose framework we struggle to make sure that people will have a better life, that they will have decent housing, electricity, decent schools. This is what I desire." Following is the interview granted Daphna Barak:



Nelson Mandela

Question: You had so many years in jail to await this leadership; is it really what you expected?

Answer: The idea of collective leadership is very difficult. It is hard for a man to think of himself in that situation. I can honestly tell you that I did not expect to be president. It was my work with a group of people with whom we were together in college and together we created the African National Congress (ANC) and became legal partners. Already then — I thought of myself as president.

Q: Please describe a day in the life of Nelson Mandela.

A: It is difficult. It is a way of life in which it is hard to dedicate time to the things that are really close to your heart.

Q: Like what?

A: Like being with the family 24 hours a day. To help your children to grow, to take care of their problems. That is the only thing I miss of my days in jail. There I had time, just to sit for hours and think. Today I have lost that pleasure.

Q: Do you even enjoy being president?

A: Well, when you discover that you have the appreciation of your community... My present life,

even if it is not the easiest way of life, is very rewarding.

Q: What have you achieved since you became president?

A: It is hard for me to point out a personal achievement because that is the result of collective leadership. The ANC is the greatest achievement of the twentieth century. Many of our people suffered, and nobody can deny that. There were times when we lost our freedom, our dignity. Many of us were tortured in prison. Many outside the ANC contributed and sacrificed so much for this achievement. Personal achievement is for me a collective effort.

Q: You mentioned the word freedom. What does that word mean to you?

A: Freedom is not only the opportunity to vote, but the gate to the awareness of many problems: hunger,

poverty, illness, non-advancement. All those rights and privileges involved in it — that is the meaning of freedom. And I am talking about rights that are much more than just a piece of paper.

Q: When you had no freedom — 27 years in prison — do you remember what you missed the most?

A: It is not easy to say: this is exactly what I most missed. There are a variety of things that you miss. But the possibility that was taken from me, of seeing my family every day, to participate in the raising of my children, to stand powerless and see the suffering of the people — those were the most difficult.

Q: A part of it — family — is still away from your reach, even though the circumstances are very different.

A: My youngest daughter said to me not long ago: "I

grew up without a father. My father was in prison. I was raised in the belief that one day my father would come home and I would have a father, and enjoy his love and support. I did not know that when my father really returned home — I still would be without a father. Because my father became the father of the nation." That goes to show how far we actually do not realise our children's expectations. I try, as much as I can. On a recent Sunday I spent time with two of my daughters and their grandchildren. It was a rare opportunity. I know that they (my family) appreciate what I do but still they have their own disappointment. And it hurts me.

Q: Being imprisoned for such a long time, how did you cope with loneliness?

A: The truth is that I was not lonely. We were 20 or 30 prisoners. I was surrounded by educated people of the highest human level.

Q: Survival: What does it mean to you?

A: So many have tried to describe it. At the moment when your normal way of life is denied to you, then you are forced to recognise it. Survival for me is the ability to cope with difficulties, with circumstances, and to overcome them.

Q: Do you remember a moment during your years in prison when you thought: That is it, I cannot survive any longer.

A: Look, I would not be human if I did not have moments like those. Yes, there were moments like that, especially when working in the mines for hours and hours. Sometimes I would believe that the ANC was about to come apart, that we would not last.

Q: Mr. Mandela, are you a strong man?

A: Well, I cannot brag about qualities that I do not have. But I remember how I created the image of brav-

ery for myself.

Q: How?

A: Oh, I remember, I remember. At the beginning, when we were brought to Robben Island, I spoke to the captain in a way he did not like. He was furious. But I stood up for myself and I said: "If you push me, I will take you to the highest supreme court. When I am finished with you, you will be in big trouble." He immediately shut up but I, deep inside, was shaking with fear.

Q: Mr. Mandela, you are 78 years old. Do you remember how people "came down" on Bob Dole, when he tried to be elected in the U.S., telling him that he was too old. And he is only 73 years old. Do you think you are fit to lead South Africa at your age?

A: If it were up to me, I would be ready to retire tomorrow morning. I have never wanted to lead the country, but I want to remind you of outstanding examples of leaders that led exemplarily at an advanced age, like Eisenhower — he was 90 years old, right? But really, believe me, I do not think that I should lead the country, no. And I will take advantage of the first opportunity to express this feeling.

Q: Will you run for the 1999 elections?

A: Oh, no! Definitely not. I haven't even thought of it.

Q: Syria: What about the accusations that you are helping them with armaments. And let us not forget the fact that Syria does not protest against terrorist activity.

A: Look, there were so few countries that helped us during our struggle, during the very difficult years: Syria, Cuba, Libya. Finally, we are able to reward them in some form for everything. After all, we are talking about countries that helped us be where we are today. They are our friends.

And that is the moral code that I respect above everything else.

Q: Is that also the reason for your deep friendship with Yasser Arafat?

A: Yasser Arafat is an outstanding leader. Do not forget that the United States refused to give him a visa and the United Nations members transferred their session to Geneva. It conveyed a message.

Q: What message?

A: That the world respects Yasser Arafat as a one-of-a-kind leader.

Q: Are you allies, or real friends?

A: Well, we are allies and friends now. It is a great honour to be associated with him. I met him last month in Bangladesh. I enjoyed myself very much.

Q: In the U.K., it seems that Tony Blair will be elected. I understand he visited you not long ago; what was your impression?

A: Obviously I do not want to get involved in the internal affairs of another country. He is intelligent, impressive, but I leave the election of their leader to the people of England. I must note that John Major is a very likeable person, simple, and gave us much support as prime minister. Therefore, I leave it completely in the hands of the British people.

Q: Louis Farrakan.

A: Yes?

Q: Do you agree with his opinions about the relations between black people and white people?

A: I met with Farrakan and I explained how we see things. I tried to enlighten him.

Q: I understand from this that you do not agree with his opinions.

A: But after we spoke, when I described our goals to him, I think that he did understand.

Q: Hillary Clinton visited you not long ago...

A: Oh, Hillary is a won-

derful woman. She is bright. She is a perfect partner to President Clinton. I enjoyed being with her and her daughter Chelsea very much.

Q: I was told that Chelsea has red your biography.

A: Oh, yes, quite... Really I have great respect for Hillary. She helped us greatly in our struggle. That was the spirit in which I met her and Chelsea. I hope that many young people will be influenced by her (by Chelsea).

Q: A completely different woman — Diana — also visited you lately.

A: Oh yes, I was really impressed by her. Mainly, I was impressed when we talked about AIDS. I remember a case that happened, when I was in prison. During the trial, a defendant announced "I have AIDS." The public, the prosecutor, everyone left the hall at once, because there is such ignorance that (the belief is that) if you sit next to an AIDS carrier you are in danger. Diana was one of the first to touch them, to try and fight against this ignorance.

Q: What about marriage?

A: Oh, my dear young lady, I am very lucky. When will I marry? I don't exactly know.

Q: But what a wonderful happy ending to your story of years in prison, self-sacrifice, a split-up family, and now you are a president, and in love.

A: To be in love is an experience that every man must go through. For me, it is a very amazing experience. One should be so grateful at being involved in such an experience. It is such a wonderful period for me.

Q: How do you pass the time, on weekends or whatever time is left from your private moments?

A: I try my best to have time with my family. Some time after this interview with you I will meet with some of my grandchildren. And mainly, if I have no official (functions), which happens very rarely...

Q: Yes?

A: I try to go to bed early.

Singapore wages battle against wayward youth

By Angela Tan
Reuters

SINGAPORE — Singapore is known for a low crime rate — and stern punishments to keep it that way — but its increasingly affluent society faces a growing problem of wayward youth.

Social workers say that delinquent behaviour, while not as widespread as in some Western countries, is a growing concern to the Singapore government.

The authorities are attacking the problem with counselling and mentor programmes as well as more drastic measures, such as boot camps, punishment for parents and "reintegrative shaming."

One source who works with youth said the government might also consider implementing a "deposit" system for parents of potential delinquents, who would lose the money if their children committed offences.

Media reports have told of vandalism, theft, drug abuse, glue-sniffing, and extortions, as well as gang fights which could be triggered by something as mundane as groups trying to stare each other down.

"As society becomes more affluent, lower achievers find they are not getting any self-fulfilment, results or recognition from parents and authority. They need to turn to something," Lee How Sheng, director of the national youth council, told Reuters.

Singapore is also witnessing what social workers say is a new phenomenon: more girls joining street gangs.

According to the latest data from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), the number of young female offenders rose to 395 in 1993 from 77 in 1984.

CID data showed the number of young people arrested for crimes grew 74.4 per cent to 2,102 in

1994 from 1,205 in 1990. Youth aged between 13 and 19 years made up about 80 per cent of the total gang membership in Singapore.

Singapore is known for stiff punishments for adults, ranging from caning and long jail terms for many crimes to death for drug trafficking and murder.

For juveniles the maximum penalty for possession of or consuming drugs, or even sniffing glue, is 10 years in jail. The minimum sentence is probation of six months to three years.

The penal code defines juveniles as those aged seven through 15 years. For those under 16, judges generally have more leeway and often put juveniles on probation.

"The court is considering involving more youths in the court process, to help us understand youths' mentality," said Chan Wai Yin, assistant director of the research and statistics unit at the subordinate court.

A legal source said policymakers were also considering new legal measures, which could be announced by end of this month.

Parliament has already passed a law, the children and young person's act, which allows courts to punish parents for crimes committed by their children.

In July 1994, the courts introduced "reintegrative shaming," where the offender and his family are chastised in court and encouraged to rehabilitate the offender through counselling, family therapy and working with schools.

In March, the courts introduced an 11-day "boot camp" of regimented training for errant youth in their early teens.

During the camp's first session, the teenagers received a crew cut, slept on a bare mattress and had

to undergo rigorous physical training after being awakened by 3 a.m.

They also attended workshops on how to communicate with parents, deal with anger and stay out of trouble, with follow-up counselling provided after the camp.

While policy makers said these 11-day camps have been successful in taming wayward kids, social workers attributed the success mostly to the follow-up counselling sessions.

"We are looking at pre-sentencing measures to combat the problem, unlike the post-sentencing style of other countries," Mr. Chan said.

Social workers said fast-developing Singapore, with the world's ninth highest per capita income at \$22,400 last year, faces an inevitable rise in crime by youths.

According to a government study on dysfunctional families, juvenile delinquency and drug abuse, the root of these problems lies with the family.

Jade Lee, a juvenile counsellor, said with more homes that have both parents working, children are often left to themselves.

Some analysts blamed a drop in the number of families where more than two generations live together, meaning grandparents are not around to fill in for parents or reinforce discipline.

Sonny, 20, who admits to triad gang connections, displays on his right arm a large tattoo of six demons. Tattooing and body piercing is becoming increasingly popular among delinquents in Singapore (Reuters photo).



Oman pledges open economy in WTO membership bid

GENEVA (R) — The Gulf state of Oman, bidding for membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), has pledged to pursue reforms aimed at a further opening of its once protected economy to the outside world.

But speaking to the first meeting of a working party on its year-old application to join the body, Oman's Commerce and Industry Minister Maqbool Ali Sultan said his country would need time to come in line with all WTO rules.

"Oman is an open economy, perhaps more open than many other countries," he said, according to a text provided by the Omani mission in Geneva.

"We are on the road to development, backed by sound economic policies based on the principles of free-market economy... We are also in the process of opening up our economy even further," he added.

Oman, four of whose other five partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) group of oil-producing states are already in the WTO, was ready to offer "meaningful commit-

ments" on goods and services to join the presently 131-member body.

But as a developing country, largely dependent on a single and exhaustible resource, it would have to ensure that its specific interests were taken into account.

Western trade diplomats, who have been holding bilateral discussions with the Omani delegation, said the Gulf state was off to a good start in its application process.

"It's trade regime is clearly based on truly liberal policies," one key envoy told Reuters.

But the diplomats said Oman's regulations on intellectual property protection and its customs evaluation procedures presented problems that would have to be overcome.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Maqbool recognised that all his country's laws and regulations were not in full conformity with WTO agreements — which cover most areas of trade including copyright issues.

"All I can say, however, is that Oman is committed to pursuing its accession to

the WTO. We would be prepared to accept all obligations under the WTO rules," he declared.

"But to bring laws into line with WTO requirements will take some time and we hope that you give us that time," Mr. Maqbool said.

Both the European Union (EU) and the United States have said they want Oman, together with its GCC partner Saudi Arabia whose application is also at the working party stage, in the WTO as soon as possible.

The four members of the grouping already in are Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

After a meeting with senior EU officials in Doha in February, Qatar's Foreign Minister Hamad Ben Jassim Ben Jabr Al Thani, acknowledged Brussels support for Saudi and Omani membership of the WTO.

He said the admission of the two, which diplomats say could come early next year, "will have a positive impact on the multilateral trading system and will reinforce the role of the GCC as a regional bloc."

Brussels, Hamburg regions the richest in the EU

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The regions of Hamburg and Brussels have the highest per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in the European Union (EU), according to figures published by the European statistics office Eurostat.

The office referred to eight regions, whose GDP per inhabitant in 1994 exceeded by 1.5 times the EU average indicated by the index of 100.

After Hamburg (196) and Brussels (183), it listed in the following order: Darmstadt, Germany; the Paris region; Upper Bavaria, Germany; Vienna; Bremen, Germany; and Hessen, Germany.

At the other end of the scale, four regions were listed as having a per capita GDP of less than half the EU average. They were Ipeiros, Greece, all French overseas territories, the Azores islands and Voreio Aigaio, Greece.

Rich, newly rich states set out anti-crisis plan

WASHINGTON (R) — An unusual alliance of industrial nations and rapidly developing countries has proposed a wide-ranging strategy for reducing the risk of financial turbulence in emerging markets.

The plan sets out guidelines for strengthening banking and financial systems in emerging markets and ways to implement them.

The aim of the exercise is to try to prevent the kind of financial crisis that rocked Mexico in 1994/95 and sparked an armed revolt in Albania this year after the collapse of a string of fraudulent, unregulated pyramid investment schemes there.

"People are dying in Albania and security forces are being mobilised in no small part because of the failure of regulation," U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers told reporters at a briefing on the new strategy.

The broad-based regulatory guidelines, which were drawn up by a working group of experts headed by Italian Treasury Ministry Director General Mario Draghi, cover everything from accounting standards to insurance supervision.

Among the measures suggested: Passage of a bankruptcy code, timely publication of financial data by banks and other institutions, establishment of adequate capital requirements and a supervisory structure free from political interference.

The guidelines will not be mandatory, but may be used by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in structuring their loan programmes and advice for emerging market economies and by international investors in deciding where to put their money.

Experts from eight industrial countries — Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States — and eight emerging markets — Argentina, Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Korea, Mexico, Poland, Singapore and Thailand — drew up the report on financial stability.

Mr. Summers said the initiative grew out of the realisation that financial crises result from both the failure of broad economic policies and from inadequate supervision of banks and other institutions.

He pinpointed two problems that frequently beset

financial systems in emerging economies — "related lending" by banks and other institutions that grant credit at favourable terms to insiders and the lack of a "national culture of credit" that mandates the repayment of loans.

Morris Goldstein, of the

Institute for International Economics think-tank, estimates that three-fourths of the world's economies have been hit by banking crises over the past 15 years. Developing nations alone have spent almost \$250 billion bailing out their banks.

Global One introduces X.25 network at Arab Bank

Global One Communications (Jordan) Ltd., part of Global One International, the worldwide joint venture of Deutsche Telekom, France Telecom and Sprint, has recently signed a contract to provide Arab Bank, the largest Jordanian bank, with X.25 network.

"We at Global One (Jordan) are very pleased to be working with Arab Bank on such a very important part of their communications network," said Inad Ayoub, General Manager of Global One Communications (Jordan) Ltd. "We are pleased to choose Global One, and we look forward to enhance the efficiency and reliability of our global communications network," said Eyad Shukairy, Senior Regional Manager of Information Systems Division — Arab Bank.

The X.25 network will enable the Arab Bank to exchange data securely and reliably between its branches, which will be collected into advanced customer services.

The Arab Bank — which started operation in Jerusalem in 1950 — is a leading international institution with more than 350 branches worldwide.

Global One offers a single source for the data needs of businesses, carriers and consumers around the world. Global One has more than 2,900 employees and over 2,200 points of presence in more than 100 countries.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7280	0.6163	1.4698	126.65	1.3803	1711.00	1.9439	5.8279
DE Mark	0.5787	-	0.3664	0.8506	73.30	0.7986	989.88	1.1249	3.3719
GB Sterling	1.6225	2.8052	-	2.3790	204.99	2.2395	2776.10	3.1540	9.4543
CH Franc	0.6804	117.49	0.4189	-	86.15	0.9385	1163.31	132.11	3.9618
JP Yen	0.0079	1.3633	0.4861	1.1596	-	1.0890	13.50	153.38	4.5972
CA Dollar	0.7245	1.2375	0.4402	1.0536	1.09	-	1224.76	1.3927	4.1726
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0096	0.3600	0.8859	1352.45	0.8065	-	11.36	3.4046
NL Guilder	0.5144	88.87	0.3169	75.81	65.12	0.7089	879.96	-	2.9965
FR Franc	0.1716	0.2965	0.1057	25.2153	21.71	0.2365	33.35	33.3500	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LEB	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7593	0.3770	3.6401	0.3036	3.6728	1639.00	3.3889
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2970	0.8325	5.1414	0.4287	5.1878	2173.73	4.7874
GB Sterling	0.2686	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0809	0.98	410.37	0.9038
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8780	0.9477	-	8.69	0.8052	0.74	4082.23	8.9606
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0303	1.0303	-	0.8834	1.01	422.78	0.9311
Kuwait Dinar	3.2944	2.3324	12.3548	1.2420	11.99	-	12.10	5070.00	0.9311
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0208	0.9911	0.0826	-	410.03	0.9226
Lebanese/1000	0.85	0.4600	2.4368	0.3450	2.3652	0.1972	2.3865	-	2.2024
Egyptian	0.2850	0.2080	1.1065	0.1112	1.0740	0.0896	1.0836	454.06	-

Energy									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LEB	EGP
Brent	18.10	18.35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
W. Texa	18.55	18.85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bony	18.10	18.35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dubai	17.50	17.75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UL Gas	192.00	194.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Metal Prices									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LEB	EGP
Gold (oz's)	340	340.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Silver (oz's)	471	473	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Platinum (oz's)	370.7	371.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AL (3 Months)	1623	1626	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CU (3 Months)	2364	2368	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Zinc (3 Months)	1261	1265	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lead (3 Months)	622	624	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NI (3 Months)	7400	7420	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls		
New York	DOW JONES	7071.2	94.72	1.36	7077.62	6978.88	6976.48		
New York	S&P 500	812.97	14.44	1.81	812.99	798.53	798.53		
London	FT-SE 100	4455.6	10.5	0.24	4468.4	4423.8	4445		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	19514.75	239.42	1.24	19516	19187.7	19275.3		
Paris	CAC 40	2655.31	15.85	0.6	2662.26	2634.71	2639.46		
Frankfurt	DAX	3460.37	22.3	0.65	3460.37	3448.55	3438.07		

Energy									
Commodity	Last	Delivery							
Coffee (c/lbs)	245.75	Spot							
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1397	Spot							
Sugar (\$/ton)	314	Spot							
Wheat (\$/ton)	178	Spot							
Soya (c/lbs)	24.22	Spot							
Tea (c/lbs)	152	Spot							
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot							
Rice (\$/ton)	480	Spot							

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Buy	Sell							
US Dollar	0.708	0.710							
GB Sterling	1.1475	1.1532							
DE Mark	0.409	0.411							
CH Franc	0.4807	0.4831							
FR Franc	0.1213	0.1219							
JP Yen	0.5682	0.5691							
NL Guilder	0.3636	0.3653							
IT Lira	0.4133	0.4154							

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS	1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
1 Mild oath															
5 Egyptian president	14					15						16			
10 USSR news agency	17					18						19			
14 Folk singer Guthrie	20				21							22			
15 "I, saw, I conquered"				23						24	25				
16 Night cry	26	27	28					29	30	31			32	33	34
17 Stunt	35					36									
18 OH city	38			39		40					41		42		
19 Ravel															
20 Powerboat platforms	43				44		45				46		47		
22 Gather crops	48					49						50			
23 Continent: abbr.															
24 Hairpin curve				51						52					
26 Ornamental plants	53	54	55			56	57	58	59				60	61	62
35 Wind dir.	63					64						65			
36 Knot															
37 Estate	66							67					68		
38 Twofold															
40 Highlanders	69					70							71		
42 Xmas															

ROSI	TIAMABILE	MUDETE	OLIVIOILL	ATONIAL	MOTIVATE	CIAMAS	FJORD	THE	ABEIT	SLOPIE	SHEID	DATE	ELON	PEERS	AGE	GLUE	RIM	MARTY	MSM	INIVER	IRIA	RAVE	ALE	ARIDE	ERE	CLIVE	LIME	HABIT	LIVE	ETIE	NAMES	RAJOAR	CULDESAC	BERIAIE	ADIUSTIC	BIGITOE	LAINTANA	SNEIER
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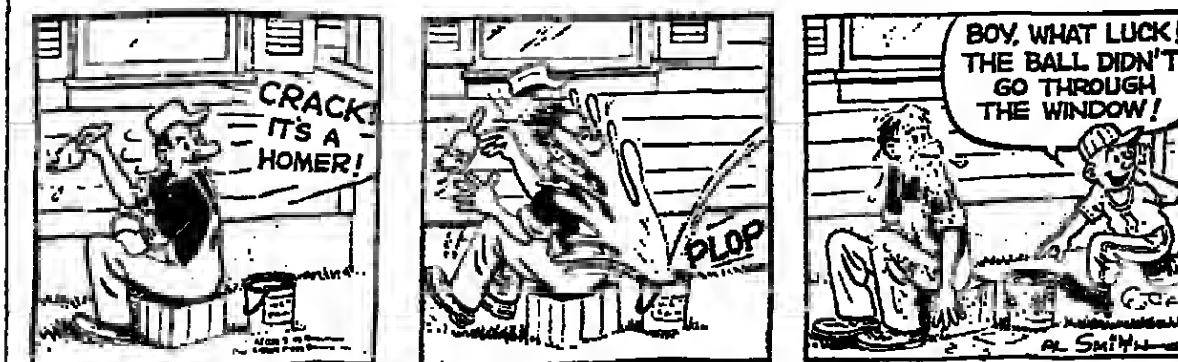
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, MAY 4, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Conditions at home may not be particularly pleasant today, however you can easily find a way solve this difficulty. This evening should be a happy one if you make plans to spend some romantic time with you mate.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You'll have the opportunity to make some valuable contacts today, so be cheerful and courteous. Don't overspend your budget or you could discover that you won't have any extra funds for an emergency.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Try to do whatever your mate desires today, since this person usually yields to your wishes. Drive with great care while on the highway if you go out together so that there won't be any difficulties.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A close friend may not be able to give you the support you had counted on today, however a fellow business associate could give you assistance. Later this evening will be good for entertaining close friends.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You should not get involved in an investment scheme which could jeopardise your financial security. Pay special attention to your health at this time so that you won't miss and days of career activities.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be sure you solve any business difficulties today before you go out for a good time with your friends. Don't take any risks later this evening, which could jeopardise you standing with bigwigs for you to be successful.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Something worthwhile can come of a small gathering with congenial friends in your home today, so be the perfect host. Avoid any disagreements later this evening with your mate or there could exchanges of words which won't be pleasant.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Any tedious, time-consuming duties should be postponed until a more propitious time. Take care of your correspondence later this evening so that you can relax with your loved ones and thereby have a pleasant time.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Housing Bank becomes an 'international commercial bank'

BY APPROVING the new articles of association and the internal regulations, the general assembly of the Housing Bank Friday launched the bank into the sphere of commercial banking in addition to its past role of extending housing loans. Along this new line, the general assembly also approved, during an extraordinary meeting, the addition of the words "international commercial bank" to the emblem of the bank. A third approval was to raise the capital of the bank from JD25 million to JD50 million through private subscription to old shareholders and by floating shares to others interested in subscribing.

The extraordinary meeting followed an ordinary meeting during which the shareholders approved the distribution of cash dividends at a rate of 20 per cent. The general assembly reviewed the bank's 1996 annual report which showed that net pre-tax profit amounted to JD10.4 million at the end of last year compared to JD10.25 million at the end of 1995. The report also showed that total assets have increased by JD33 million to reach JD1,136 million in 1996.

Other financial data were the rise in reserves to JD56.3 million and the increase in shareholders' equity to JD81.3 million from JD77.7 million. Deposits of clients grew from JD839.8 million in 1995 to JD895.2 million in 1996. However, if deposits of other banks and financial institutions are to be taken into consideration the total of deposits at the end of last year would amount to JD917.6 million, an increase of 3.7 per cent or JD32.6 million over the 1995 total deposits. Credits and loans extended by the bank last year totalled about 225 million bringing to JD2,266 million the volume of credits extended by the bank since it was established in 1973 until the end of 1996. Of the overall volume, JD1,100 million were extended for housing and real estate financing of 156,699 housing units having an approximate area of 22 million square metres representing 21.4 per cent of all licensed areas in the Kingdom.

The Housing Bank has a network of 121 branches in Jordan representing 97.2 per cent of the total number of banks operating in the Kingdom. The bank has two branches in the Palestinian territories. According to Board Chairman and Executive President Zuhair Khoury, the Housing Bank will be the top bank in Jordan in terms of capital and shareholders' equity when the procedures of raising the capital are completed. He expected shareholders' equity to exceed JD2,100 million (Al Ra'i + Al Dussour + Al Aswaj).

Murad urges Taiwanese delegation to explore investment opportunities in Jordan

ECONOMIC AND trade talks were held Saturday between a visiting Taiwanese delegation and a Jordanian team headed by Haidar Murad, president of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce. Mr. Murad urged higher exports to Taiwan as the country had a high potential to export Jordanian products.

Noting that the trade balance was in favour of Taiwan, Mr. Murad indicated that Jordanian imports from Taiwan amounted to \$55 million in 1996 whereas Jordanian exports to Taiwan were only \$17 million.

Mr. Murad encouraged the Taiwanese delegation to look for the possibility of investing in Jordan either through the Amman Financial Market or through setting up joint ventures with Jordanian businessmen. He stressed that Jordan was strategically located to serve as a base to reach neighbouring countries especially as Jordan's economy is based on economic freedom and liberal trade policies.

The Taiwanese delegation comprises representatives from 12 governorates in Taiwan who are known to have a leading role in drawing external trade policies and commercial relations between Taiwan and other countries of the world.

Mr. Yen sounds warning on currencies, interest rates

TOKYO (R) — Top Japanese finance official Eisuke Sakakibara has said that currencies were out of kilter with economic reality and sounded a warning that Japan's era of record-low interest rates may be drawing to a close.

Mr. Sakakibara, one of the world's most closely watched policymakers, also put markets on notice that they could face a burst of intervention to prop up the yen if Japanese authorities judge it has fallen too far.

Speaking in an interview with Reuters, the man dubbed "Mr. Yen" for his power over financial markets, said it would be dangerous to assume that Japanese interest rates will cling to their record-low levels over the coming year.

Mr. Sakakibara, director-general of the ministry of finance's International

Finance Bureau, also said that Japanese government bonds — which have been soaring on prospects of continued easy credit — are in a "bubble" that could burst.

"Intervention to halt excessive currency movements is most effective when it is done at a time when markets do not expect it," Mr. Sakakibara told Reuters Financial Television.

A consensus has been building in financial markets that the Bank of Japan (BOJ) will not intervene to sell the dollar unless the greenback makes a decisive push above 127.16 yen, a 56-month high hit on April 10.

Mr. Sakakibara expressed concern about the yen's recent slide, saying currency movements had been overly rapid and could not be justified by economic funda-

mentals. Cooperation among the Group of Seven (G-7) industrial nations, which was confirmed at their meeting in February in Berlin, remains unchanged, he added.

The dollar has made a stunning recovery from its postwar nadir of 79.75 yen hit exactly two years ago and is now trading at its highest level in more than four years. Mr. Sakakibara earned his sobriquet "Mr. Yen" from his role in formulating policies that speeded the dollar's comeback to its current peak.

Mr. Sakakibara also challenged a widespread market belief that a wave of capital flowing out of Japan has been a key factor in the dollar's rally, saying Japan turned a net capital importer in February and March as Japanese investors took profits on foreign bonds and

repariated the proceeds. Japanese institutional investors may gradually boost their foreign bond holdings, he said, although the impact on foreign exchange is hard to determine as investors may decide to hedge the risks of holding those foreign assets.

Meanwhile, a large amount of foreign bond buying by individual Japanese investors is unlikely to continue, he added.

Mr. Sakakibara also said that gloom about Japan's economy — which has fuelled the movements on foreign exchange and bond markets — is misplaced, saying statistics for the April-June quarter are likely to show an improvement. "I am saying that markets must be very careful. If you analyse carefully, you find there are no indicators showing the economy is

worsening," he said.

Once the strength of the economy is clear, it would be natural for the central bank to raise interest rates, he said. Japan's key interest rate has been at a rock bottom 0.5 per cent since late 1995 to help nurture the nation's frail recovery.

He said it would be dangerous for financial markets to assume that Japan will not see higher rates over the next year.

"If I put it rather harshly, the market is considerably bubbly, and there is the risk of a bursting (of the bubble)," Mr. Sakakibara said.

He also said Japan's politically sensitive trade surplus is likely to fall over the medium to long-term. A recent rise in the surplus, reversing a long decline, has fuelled concern about trade friction with the United States, Japan's biggest trading partner.

Big bond buyers lured to fund vast energy projects

LONDON (R) — Oil and gas companies will increasingly turn to international capital markets for the huge sums needed to fund mammoth energy projects in the world's emerging economies, industry financiers say.

The pace of such innovative financing will pick-up after the success of Qatar's Ras Laffan liquefied natural gas (LNG) project bond issue last December, participants at an oil and gas finance conference were told.

The \$1.2 billion issue, part of a \$2.5 billion debt package to fund LNG production from Qatar's North Field, was vastly oversubscribed, said Gregory Randolph of investment bank Goldman Sachs, the bond's lead underwriter.

The capital markets were less concerned with the political risk of investing in the Middle East than anticipated, said Mr. Randolph, confirming a growing appetite for slightly more adventurous debt.

"There are other big oil and energy projects in the (project finance) pipeline," he added. Traditionally energy sector funding has been by syndicated loan or equity.

"The oil industry lends itself to bonds, it's a dollar denominated commodity so you don't have currency risk, its export nature in general mitigates any political risks and typically you have strong sponsorship of such projects," Mr. Randolph indicated.

The expanding use of bonds to finance oil and gas infrastructure work in less developed countries has pivoted on the ability to win a higher credit rating for the project than the sovereign debt of the country where it is located.

Ras Laffan was rated an A3 investment grade project by Moody's Investor Services, whereas Qatar's sovereign debt is a lesser BAA2, said

Ted Izatt, head of Moody's oil and gas group.

Projects in all sectors of the oil industry, from refining to petrochemicals, have been rated higher than the debt of their hosts, with deals done in Indonesia, across South America and in Nigeria.

The strategic value of the commodity to the country involved was essentially what secured the higher rating, said Mr. Izatt. Some 25 energy projects, worth \$7 billion in debt, went to the capital markets for funding last year.

"The number is growing because capital markets are more familiar with the complexity of such deals and in many cases they can go over the sovereign rating," said Mr. Izatt.

But capital market investors appear still unwilling to go it alone on energy projects, looking for the presence of export credit agencies (ECAs) and commercial banks in financing packages as evidence deals have been judiciously appraised.

British, U.S. and Italian government loans and bank investment of around \$450 million made up the remainder of the Ras Laffan project's debt financing.

The breakthrough at Ras Laffan was the ability to sell debt with longer maturities, said Mr. Randolph. The second tranche's 15-year span doubled the previous longest term for a Middle Eastern debt issue.

"The new phenomenon was the depth of demand for longer debt maturities in emerging markets," said Mr. Randolph. "That's where capital markets have their competitive advantage versus bank and ECA financing."

A critical test for such financing will be in the countries of the former Soviet Union which need massive energy spending but do not have the political and economic stability needed to attract general investors.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607170											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 03/05/1007											
PART 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	QTY.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE		
HIGH	LOW			TRANS.	SHARES	TRADED	PRICE	PRICE			
250.000	213.000	ARAB BANK	11.7	1.57	6	120	30580	253.00	233.00	2.00+	
2.100	1.690	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	E	0.00	26	30750	52710	1.60	1.73	.06+	
1.210	.880	HED. EAST TRV. INC.	52.4	0.60	2	200	7320	.96	.95	-.01-	
5.100	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	14.0	4.13	1	5000	23500	4.87	4.70	.17-	
2.080	2.440	JOR. KAWAT BANK	18.0	0.00	3	245	634	2.58	2.50	.01+	
1.090	.800	JOR. SUIF BANK	4.8	8.54	5	27450	22245	.81	.82	.01+	
4.110	3.480	JOR. TEL. BANK	14.6	3.33	4	550	1084	3.52	3.60	.02-	
2.660	1.380	UNION BK. NAV. INV.	03.4	0.00	2	450	601	1.40	1.33	.07-	
2.850	1.030	SEIT. AL-HAL (SEITWA)	.6	14.71	5	1500	1545	1.03	1.02	.01-	
1.440	1.000	PELJELAND. INV. INC.	0	0.00	2	2100	5313	1.14	1.13	.01-	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 102.27	INDEX: 102.27	INDEX: 102.27	INDEX: 102.27	INDEX: 102.27	INDEX: 102.27	INDEX: 102.27	INDEX: 102.27	INDEX: 102.27	INDEX: 102.27	INDEX: 102.27	INDEX: 102.27
2.320	2.100	HOLY LAND INSUR.	6.8	0.00	3	3542	8097	2.25	2.30	.05+	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 116.86	INDEX: 116.86	INDEX: 116.86	INDEX: 116.86	INDEX: 116.86	INDEX: 116.86	INDEX: 116.86	INDEX: 116.86	INDEX: 116.86	INDEX: 116.86	INDEX: 116.86	INDEX: 116.86
1.820	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	7.8	6.21	1	250	403	1.60	1.61	.08-	
1.320	.030	KATL. PORTFOLIO	0	0.00	8	4210	4229	.08	.00	.01+	
3.720	2.000	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	7.8	0.00	3	750	2250	3.00	3.00	.00	
1.220	.060	KARMA EDUCATION	0	0.00	1	100	08	.07	.08	.01+	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 102.11	INDEX: 102.11	INDEX: 102.11	INDEX: 102.11	INDEX: 102.11	INDEX: 102.11	INDEX: 102.11	INDEX: 102.11	INDEX: 102.11	INDEX: 102.11	INDEX: 102.11	INDEX: 102.11
3.800	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	25.4	2.01	47	14153	33464	3.72	3.78	.06+	
3.500	2.710	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	8.3	3.28	1	100	305	3.05	3.05	.00	
10.400	8.720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	0.4	9.18	1	20	104	10.10	0.68	.51-	
3.260	1.650	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGR.	0	0.00	3	800	1424	1.78	1.78	.00	
4.100	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	0.6	5.73	15	8542	23870	3.67	3.40	.18-	
5.010	4.250	DAR ALDINA DV. INV.	10.0	5.60	2	1700	7326	4.63	4.42	.21-	
5.400	3.130	ARAB ALUM. IND.	8.3	8.96	2	500	1675	3.40	3.35	.05-	
.960	.430	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.8	0.00	21	15450	7880	.51	.51	.00	
1.540	.710	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	8	0.00	9	2300	1803	.73	.71	.02-	
3.090	2.150	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	20.2	4.46	1	2850	6384	2.15	2.24	.09+	
3.730	2.130	KATL. CABLE WIRE. MPAC	13.8	0.00	9	1900	4948	2.60	2.59	.01-	
1.170	.570	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	9	0.00	37	25750	18293	.70	.69	.01-	
1.710	1.120	ARAB PHARM. CHIM.	26.4	0.00	2	3650	5457	1.42	1.41	.01-	
2.660	1.410	UNIV. MOH. IND.	9	.18	2	400	379	1.41	1.41	.00	
1.780	1.140	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	18.3	8.77	10	3300	3764	1.15	1.14	.01-	
1.290	.840	JOR. RES. CABLE CO.	15.6	0.00	25	10850	9237	.87	.85	.02-	
1.260	.750	YEL. KAY READY WEAR	7	0.00	1	150	286	1.79	1.73	.06-	
1.360	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	27.9	0.00	8	6100	7186	1.12	1.17	.02-	
1.440	.800	UNION CH. & VEG.	27.2	0.00	9	18500	16048	.89	.86	.03-	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 113.99	INDEX: 113.99	INDEX: 113.99	INDEX: 113.99	INDEX: 113.99	INDEX: 113.99	INDEX: 113.99	INDEX: 113.99	INDEX: 113.99	INDEX: 113.99	INDEX: 113.99	INDEX: 113.99
GRAND TOTAL	INDEX: 150.31	INDEX: 150.31	INDEX: 150.31	INDEX: 150.31	INDEX: 150.31	INDEX: 150.31	INDEX: 150.31	INDEX: 150.31	INDEX: 150.31	INDEX: 150.31	INDEX: 150.31
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 03/05/1007											
.790	.440	JOR. TRADE FAC.	12.0	0.00	8	8500	2025	.45	.45	.00	
.840	.670	UNION TRV. 50%	64.1	0.00	1	1850	3363	.68	.67	.01-	
.840	.370	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	30	141600	64667	.46	.48	.02+	
.950	.740	AL-SHARQ INV. 75%	E	0.00	28	125000	66800	.74	.77	.03+	
.050	.620	AL-DALAYAT 75%	14.7	0.00	2	900	330	.65	.65	.00	
.740	.310	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	1	300	171	.38	.57	.01-	
1.690	1.300	NATL. CHOCOLATE	13.2	5.00	1	200	280	1.40	1.40	.00	
.840	.400	NATL. MILK. INC. MAMICO	E	0.00	93	116300	68330	.60	.60	.00	
.640	.420	RAYAN QUES & BOULDS	E	0.00	8	18050	10802	.56	.57	.01+	
.980	.720	JORDAN STEEL	E	0.00	15	31050	22412	.73	.72	.01-	
.640	.300	INDS. ENG.	25.0	0.00	4	1500	630	.42	.42	.00	
.060	.760	INDS. CHEMICAL	E	0.00	1	1000	760	.78	.78	.00	
.820	.590	NATL. POULTRY	E	0.00	3	1200	833	.70	.69	.01-	
.870	.530	HED. EAST COMPLEX	7.0	0.00	40	36250	24138	.66	.67	.01+	
GRAND TOTAL											
249	510300	249	510300	249	510300	249	510300	249	510300	249	510300

JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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Chelsea's Zola named Footballer of the Year

LONDON (AFP) — Chelsea's Italian maestro Gianfranco Zola is the Footballer of the Year, completing a hat-trick of foreign winners of the Football Writers' Award in its 50th year.

The 30-year-old has made a stunning impact on the English game, including reaching the FA Cup final with Chelsea, and follows Germany's Jurgen Klinsmann (1995) and French ace Eric Cantona (1996) in capturing the 350-strong vote.

And he will be presented with the award at London's Royal Lancaster Hotel a week next Thursday just two days before Chelsea's Wembley showpiece against Middlesbrough by Sir Stanley Matthews, the original recipient in 1948.

Another pocket-sized overseas star, Middlesbrough's brilliant Brazilian Juninho, earned second place.

And the Stamford Bridge club will hope there is a Wembley Omen in that, especially as another of their star forwards, Welshman Mark Hughes finished third, just one vote behind.

But Zola won by a distance, polling twice the total number of votes gained by Juninho and Hughes.

Top English player was Manchester United's David Beckham in fourth place.

A delighted Zola, who is fighting an injury-battle after being substituted with hamstring trouble in Italy's 3-0 World

Cup win over Poland on Wednesday, said: "Every footballer wants to win a prize like this."

"It is a big honour for me and I feel very lucky. It is hard for me to explain with words what I am feeling. It is not easy to be voted footballer of the year when there are so many good players in England."

Chelsea's Dutch manager Ruud Gullit, the runner-up to United's Cantona last year, said: "I am pleased for Franco and pleased for the club. Let's hope he gets a Wembley winners' medal to go with this trophy."

Frans Thijssen the former Ipswich and Holland international who won the FWA award in 1981 will fly in from Malmö where he is now coaching to join the soccer writers' 50th anniversary celebrations.

And 14 other previous winners including Gary Lineker (1986 and 1992), Bobby Charlton and Pat Jennings will honour Zola at a gala dinner.

Sir Stanley Matthews, who won the award for a second time in 1963, is one of 29 Englishmen to have collected it. There have been nine Scottish winners, four from Northern Ireland, two each from Wales and Germany and one apiece from the Republic of Ireland, Holland and France.

Now Zola, who joined Chelsea in a 4.5 million move from Serie A giants Parma in November, becomes the first from Italy to win again underlining the impact of overseas players on the British game.



Emilio Alvarez of Spain returns a ball against Germany's Marcello Craca in the quarterfinal match of the Paegas Czech Open tennis tournament in Prague. Alvarez won the match 6-3, 7-5 (Reuters photo)

Rios crashes in Czech Open

PRAGUE (AFP) — Chilean second seed and world number eight Marcelo Rios crashed out of the Czech Open here Friday, beaten in three sets by Frenchman Fabrice Santoro, who won their quarter-final 4-6, 6-3, 6-0.

Another Frenchman, Cedric Pioline, also made the last four by beating Australian Richard Fromberg 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.

Rios' defeat was the second major shock here in two days, with unknown German Marcello Craca, ranked 135th in the world,

putting out top-seeded Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the world number four, in a second round clash.

Craca failed to make any further progress Friday as Emilio Alvarez of Spain beat him 6-3, 7-5.

Alvarez will now play Pioline in the semi.

Rios, who won the Monte Carlo Open last Sunday, appeared to have Santoro's measure as he won the first set and swiftly moved to 4-1 in the second.

But Santoro suddenly changed his tactics, playing

longer returns instead of relying primarily on drop shots.

Rios, in contrast, quickly lost his way once he failed to secure the second set and was never in it in the third.

Saying he was tired after his exertions in Monte Carlo, Rios admitted that Santoro, who now meets Bohdan Ulihrach in the other semi-final, had played the better tennis.

Ulihrach put out Albert Portas of Spain 2-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Clubs treating players like horses — Blatter

ZURICH (R) — FIFA General Secretary Sepp Blatter has criticised leading clubs for making excessive demands on top players and treating them like circus horses.

In an interview at FIFA headquarters in Zurich, he claimed the quality of football suffered when players had to perform too often.

"There should be less matches played by a single player," Blatter said. "The clubs pay a lot to the players and say they have to perform, like horses. But we are not in a circus, we are in a game. Players need time for recuperation. There are physical and mental limits."

Blatter singled out England and Spain as two countries in particular, where the number of clubs in the top division is

above-average.

"In England there are 20 teams and in Spain 22, plus different cups, then international cup competitions," he said. "So it's always the best players who have to perform."

But he denied that problems were caused by the increased number of international matches, and said that FIFA's powers to improve the situation were limited.

"They don't play too much for the national team, because they have five days preparation and not more than ten or 12 matches per year. We can only intervene by cutting the number of teams in the different associations, but that's only a recommendation."

In a wide-ranging interview, Blatter said that relations between the co-hosts

for the World Cup in 2002, Japan and South Korea, had improved. "They now work together, sit together and speak together," he said. The next meeting between representatives of the two countries is in Zurich on May 5. Blatter also re-stated his arguments for fully professional referees at the highest levels of football, and said he regretted the influence that television was exerting, citing the English Premier League, where matches are sometimes played on five different days of the week.

But he rejected the idea that World Cup qualifying matches should be played on a world-wide basis, arguing that the six confederations were all entitled to be represented at the finals.

Korda bounced from ATT challenge

ATLANTA (R) — unseeded Swede Magnus Norman deprived the ATT challenge of its highest remaining seed for the second consecutive night when he bounced fifth-seeded Czech Petr Korda in straight sets on Friday.

The 81st-ranked Norman reached his third career semifinal with a 6-4 6-4 victory over Korda just a day after picking off fourth seed Andre Agassi.

The top three seeds — Michael Chang, Jonas Bjorkman and Jim Courier — were all upset earlier in the week.

Norman earned a semifinal clash with seventh-seeded Australian Jason Stoltenberg, who had to play just four games before taking his place in the final four.

Stoltenberg moved on when Fernando Meligeni retired trailing 1-3 in the first set. The unseeded Brazilian had sustained a hip injury in his previous match and was unable to compete effectively Friday.

The other semifinal pits eighth-seeded American Chris Woodruff against unseeded Marcelo Filippini of Uruguay.

Filippini, the lowest ranked player remaining in the field at 92, advanced easily with a 6-1 6-2 rout of Austria's Gilbert Schaller. Woodruff posted a 6-1 4-6 6-3 victory over unseeded Australian Sandon Stalle.

Norman, who keeps a daily diary of his play which he consults for advice before each match, had lost to Korda in their only previous meeting earlier this year. He said he deviated from his usual routine prior to the rematch.

Throwing in big serves when he needed them, Norman took the first set, then broke Korda in the first game of the second set when the fifth seed double-faulted.

Korda, ranked 28 and still working his way back to form after two injury-plagued years, evened the match by breaking back for 2-2.

But forehand errors cost him a break in the ninth game and Norman served two of his 12 aces to serve out the victory 6-4.

Lakers advance, Hawks force 5th game

PORTLAND (R) — The Los Angeles Lakers held off the Portland Trail Blazers on Friday to advance to the second round of the NBA playoffs, but Detroit failed to put away the Hawks as Atlanta forced a fifth and deciding game in their first-round series.

Shaquille O'Neal and Elden Campbell scored 27 points apiece to lead the Lakers, who used a 9-0 run after Portland forward Rasheed Wallace fouled out in the closing minutes to defeat the Trail Blazers 95-91.

The Lakers won the best-of-five series three games to one and will meet the top-seeded Utah Jazz in the western conference semifinals.

Eddie Jones added 15 points for the Lakers, who trailed 49-44 at the half and 74-68 after three quarters.

Arvydas Sabonis had 23 points and 10 rebounds to lead Portland, which was eliminated in the first round for the fifth consecutive season.

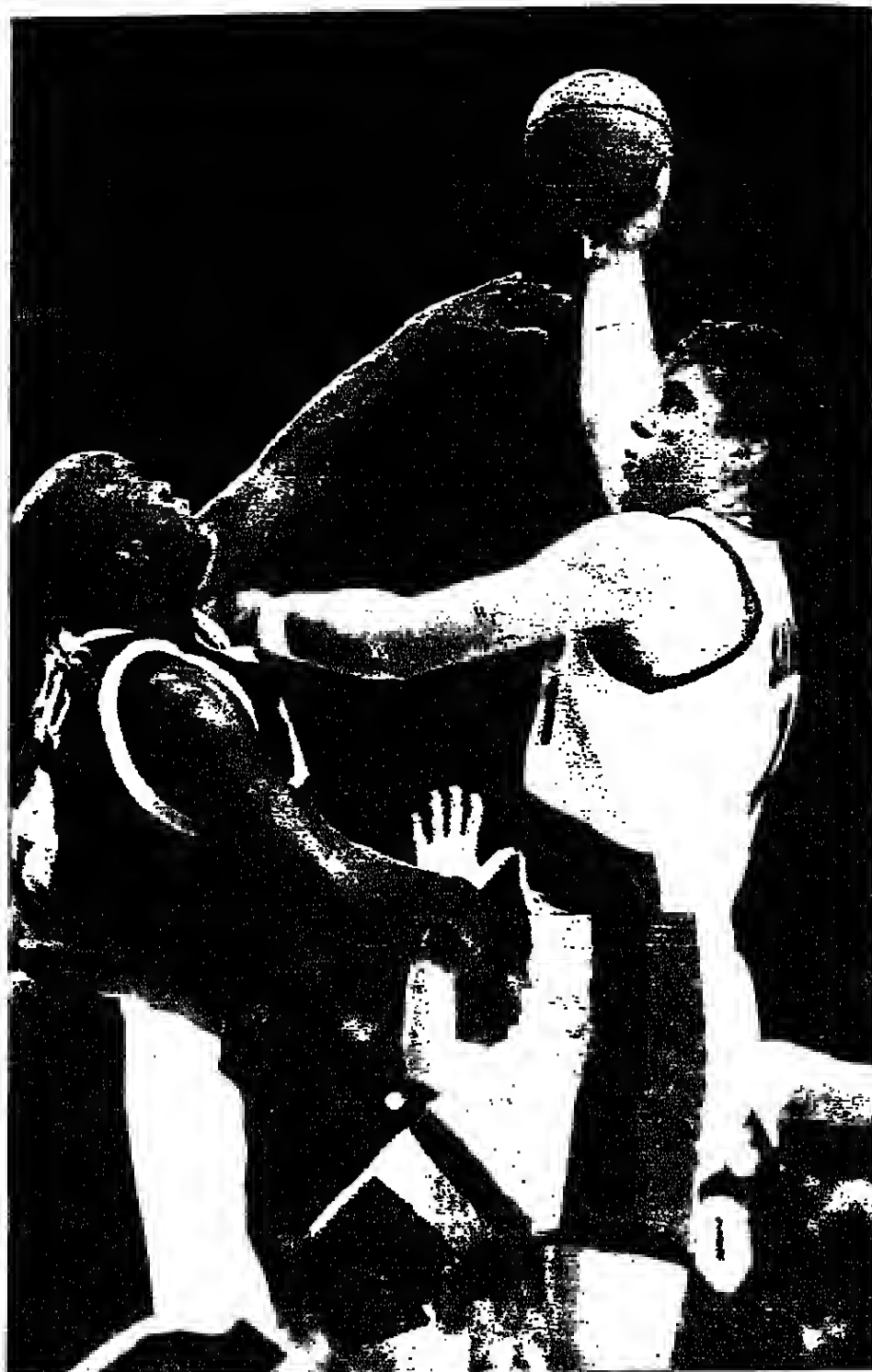
Wallace added 21 points and nine rebounds for Portland, but fouled out with 2:04 left and the Blazers clinging to a three-point lead.

"Tonight we came out and played well and we'll take the win," said a low-key O'Neal after the victory.

At Detroit, Steve Smith scored 28 points and Mookie Blaylock fell one assist shy of a triple-double as the Atlanta Hawks beat the Pistons 94-82 to even their first-round Eastern Conference series at two games apiece.

Smith was 5-of-6 from three-point range for Atlanta and Blaylock recorded 10 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists. "Steve stepped up huge," Atlanta coach Lenny Wilkens said. "I can't say enough about him. From the all-star game on, he's been playing great. Because he stepped up huge, that got Mookie going."

Dikembe Mutombo added 16 points and 12 rebounds



Arvydas Sabonis (R) of the Portland Trailblazers attempts a shot while Shaquille O'Neal of the Los Angeles Lakers tries to block during the first quarter of their NBA playoff game in Portland (Reuters photo)

Wilkens said. "I can't say enough about him. From the all-star game on, he's been playing great. Because he stepped up huge, that got Mookie going."

Dikembe Mutombo added 16 points and 12 rebounds

and Christian Laettner 11 and 12 as the Hawks dominated the boards, outbounding the Pistons 50-35.

"They just did a better job in every phase," Detroit coach Doug Collins said of the Hawks. "They played

great."

Game five is set for Sunday at Atlanta, where the Hawks were 36-5 during the regular season.

Grant Hill scored 28 points to lead the Pistons, who are trying to win a playoff series for the first time since the 1991 Eastern Conference semifinals.

"We let it slip through our hands and now we've got to go down to Atlanta," Hill said. "We won there before, we won there the last time we played there. We have to win there Sunday, that's the bottom line."

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlanta 94 Detroit 82
(Best-of-five series tied 2-2)

WESTERN CONFERENCE

LA Lakers 95 Portland 91
(Lakers win best-of-five series 3-1)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

French teenager surges on

HAMBURG (AFP) — French teenager Anne-Gaëlle Sidot swept into the semi-finals of the \$450,000 WTA tournament here Friday when she defeated Petra Langrova of the Czech Republic in three sets. The fiery 17-year-old stormed home 6-1, 4-6, 6-1 against the player who put out defending champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario in the previous round. She now faces Romania's Ruxandra Dragomir, who beat Austria's Barbara Schett, for a place in Sunday's final. French number-one Mary Pierce came close to joining Sidot in the last four. But she was finally beaten 6-2, 4-6, 4-6 by Croatia's Iva Majoli. Majoli now plays Spain's Maria Sanchez-Lorenzo. Friday's shock winner over compatriot and world number six Conchita Martinez, Sanchez-Lorenzo scored a 7-5, 5-7, 6-2 win.

Coach dies as team lose

CAGLIARI (AFP) — A youth team coach has died of a heart attack here because his side began losing a regional cup semi-final. Franco Zedda, 56, whose 16-year-old son Gianfranco was playing for his Quaru Sant' Elena team, collapsed after their opponents Selargius made it 2-0 soon after the start of the second half. The game continued as Zedda was rushed to hospital, where he died soon after arrival after suffering a second heart attack. His team meanwhile pulled a goal back and then equalised before going on to win the tie in a penalty shoot-out.

Basler hopeful of recovery

MUNICH (R) — Bayern Munich midfielder Mario Basler hopes he will recover from a thigh strain in time for Sunday's Derby clash with 1860 Munich. Basler sustained the injury while playing for the German national side in Wednesday's 2-0 win over Ukraine. "I'm feeling better," Basler said after taking part in light training on Friday. "I'm

getting injections and I think we'll manage to make it in time for Sunday." The midfielder scored Germany's second goal on Wednesday and has been in outstanding form for Bayern in the last few weeks.

Celtic sack manager Burns

GLASGOW (R) — Scottish Premier Division club Celtic sacked manager Tommy Burns on Friday after three almost barren years at the Glasgow club. The decision, reported on British radio, to release Burns from his contract before it expired at the end of the season comes with city arch-rivals Rangers poised for their ninth consecutive league crown. Celtic, who have won only one trophy under Burns, are not appointing a successor immediately. Burns' position has grown insecure in the shadow of Rangers' continuing dominance. Rangers won all four league matches between the teams this season, and Celtic also suffered a surprise Scottish Cup semifinal defeat recently at the hands of First Division Falkirk.

Dundee to say at Karlsruhe

KARLSRUHE (AFP) — Karlsruhe has claimed victory in its battle to keep South African-born striker Sean Dundee for one more season. As far as the club is concerned, the last chance Dundee had to move elsewhere was on Wednesday, April 30th. "It is the legal understanding of Karlsruhe that the player has no more opportunity in this year to end his contract prematurely," a club statement said. Dundee, 24, believes that a clause in his contract grants him until June 30th to decide on his future. Dundee has 15 goals to his name this season but hasn't scored for several weeks. The pressure of an upturned private life is also taking its toll. He has had a bust up with goalkeeper Claus Reimaier, until lately a close companion. And his 17 year old former girlfriend — from whom he split last year — this week bore his child.

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	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	STRIPTSEASE	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2"	
			Shows: 8:30, 10:30	Michael Jordan...in SPACEJAM	
				Shows: 3:30, 6:00	

United battle back for 2-2 draw at Leicester

LONDON (R)— Manchester United's hopes of swiftly wrapping up the Premier League title took a knock on Saturday when they were held 2-2 at League Cup Winners Leicester.

Goals from Steve Walsh in the 16th minute and Ian Marshall four minutes later put United on the backfoot.

But Ole Gunnar Solskjaer pulled one back on the stroke of halftime and the Norwegian grabbed the equaliser six minutes into the second half. Both United goals were set up by Andy Cole.

The result raised a slight flicker of hope among nearest pursuers Arsenal and Liverpool who were in action later on Saturday. Arsenal were at home to Newcastle, while Liverpool were hosting Tottenham.

Arsenal, with just two games left including Saturday's match, are five points behind United. Liverpool, with three



Manchester United's Nicky Butt clashes with Matt Elliott (R) at Filbert Street, Leicester. The two sides met in the FA Carling Premiership (Reuters photo).

games remaining including Saturday, trail the champions by six points.

However, United still have three matches left and all are at home —

against Middlesbrough, Newcastle and West Ham.

1st Division Basketball Championship Hussein take on Orthodoxi tonight

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Hussein host titleholders Al Orthodoxi in Irbid Sunday night in the third match of the second round of the First Division Basketball Championship.

Al Hussein have not yet won a single match and seem unlikely to do so tonight. With Al Yarmouk already relegated for withdrawing at the beginning of the competition, Al Hussein are playing with no serious goal in mind and no matter what their results they will keep their place in the prestigious group for the coming season.

Al Orthodoxi are currently third and are reeling after their unexpected 70-66 defeat to Al Ahli in the first round.

For the first time in years, Al Orthodoxi are not topping the overall standings but merely hoping to stay in contention for the prestigious title after they also lost 63-54 to Al Jazireh in the first round.

Al Ahli had lost to new leaders Al Jazireh 85-57 and new Armenian coach Raffi Cholukyan was handed the reins following their dismal showing.

With three of Jordan's top players — Naser Bushnaq, Yousef Zaghoul and Marwan Ma'touq — off the team Cholukyan, a former head coach of the Soviet Union's national teams, has the hard task of lifting the team's form and morale in trying to end Al Orthodoxi's current two-year reign.

He takes over from Ghaith Najjar, Al Ahli's coach for the past two seasons, during which the team was unable to reclaim the title and have been in a slumping form ever since.

Al Ahli were previously trained by Ukrainian Alexander Sacha who guided the team to a 1990 win ending Al Ortho-

doxi's 1976-1989 reign atop the Kingdom's basketball scene.

Al Ahli went on to win the crown in 1992, 93, 94 before Sacha left his post after apparent differences with the board.

The fight for the title has become a competitive three way race that now seems to be tilting in Al Jazireh's favour.

Al Jazireh's young lineup seem to have undoubtedly benefited from their participation in the Arab Clubs tournament in Tunisia last month.

After coming close to the title in the past two seasons, Al Jazireh have gone a step further this season and seem to be no longer settling for finishing behind all-time rivals Al Ahli and Al Orthodoxi who have dominated the scene for as long as fans can remember.

Al Jazireh currently top the standings after their 91-65 win over Al Hussein in the opening match of the second round Friday.

Al Ahli beat Al Hussein 101-50 in the other match.

Team	Standings				
	P	W	L	SE	SA
Jazireh	5	5	-	435	235
Ahli	5	4	1	368	300
Orthodoxi	4	2	2	300	252
Jalil	5	1	4	287	397
Hussein	5	-	5	225	431
Yarmouk	-	-	-	-	-

*Relegated to 2nd Division

Brozna grand slam sparks Phillies past Rockies; Orioles beat Athletics

DENVER (R) — Rico Brozna hit the second grand slam of his career as the Philadelphia Phillies scored five runs in the first inning on the way to a 7-4 victory over the Colorado Rockies on Friday.

Darren Daulton gave the Phils a 1-0 lead with an RBI single in the first before Brozna launched his second

homer of the season with the bases loaded to make it 5-0. Mickey Morandini two-run double in the sixth

knocked Rockies starter Mark Thompson out of the game. Thompson (3-2) was tagged for all seven runs as he gave up seven hits, walked three and hit two batters in six innings.

"I threw terrible tonight."

Womack led off with a single off Mike Bielecki (1-1) and was sacrificed to second by Jermaine Allensworth. He stole third and Johnson followed with a line drive off Alan Embree down the right-field line, bringing home the winning run.

Chris Peters (1-0) notched the win by pitching a perfect eighth inning.

Al Martin belted a two-run homer off Atlanta starter Greg Maddux for Pittsburgh's other runs. Mark Lemke had a solo shot in the fifth for Atlanta.

In New York, Alex Ochoa's dribbler down the third-base line scored Carlos Baerga with the go-ahead run in the bottom of the seventh as the surging

scored David Segui with two outs in the eighth inning, lifting the Montreal Expos to a 5-4 victory over the struggling Padres.

Dave Veres (1-0) recorded the final two outs in the seventh inning for the win. Ugueth Urbina picked up a save.

Doug Bochtler (0-1) allowed one run and two hits over two innings as the Padres lost for the ninth time in 10 games.

San Diego's Tony Gwynn went 3-for-5 with a home run and collected his 2,600th career hit with a single in the first.

In Los Angeles, Tom Prince's sacrifice fly scored Greg Gagne with the winning run in the bottom of the 10th inning as the Dodgers

bobbled the ball. Prince then lifted a flyball to right-center, scoring Gagne easily.

Los Angeles trailed 7-6 entering the bottom of the ninth, but tied the game when Cubs closer Mel Rojas walked four batters to force across the tying run.

Tom Candiotti (3-1) pitched a scoreless 10th to earn the victory for Los Angeles.

Yankees beat Royals

Tino Martinez and Bernie Williams each hit two-run homers and David Cone allowed five hits over seven innings as the New York Yankees romped to a 9-1 victory over the Kansas City Royals on Friday.

Cone (3-2) allowed one run with five walks and six strikeouts for the victory. Mariano Rivera allowed one hit in 1 1/3 scoreless innings for his ninth save.

"It was a little nail-biter for a while," Yankees manager Joe Torre said. "Finally in the eighth and ninth, it got better for us. Bernie's home run came at a perfect time."

Jim Pitsley (0-2) allowed four runs and four hits with four walks and one strikeout over 7 2/3 innings.

Martinez, who set a record for RBIs in the month of April, has kept up his torrid pace in May.

The Royals got a run back on Johnny Damon's RBI double in the fifth. But Williams got to Pitsley with his third round tripper with two out in the eighth to make it 4-1.

The Yanks batted around the order, tacking on five more runs in the ninth to put the game out of reach.

Kansas City manager Bob Boone said the contest was, "an excellent ballgame, really, and then it turned ugly."

In Seattle, Randy Johnson picked up his fourth win and Ken Griffey added his Major-League leading 14th homer as the Seattle Mariners pounded the Milwaukee Brewers 8-1.

Johnson (4-0) allowed just one run — a solo homer to Matt Mieske in the seventh — and three hits, walked one and struck out 11, reaching double figures in strikeouts for the 70th time in his career.

Griffey hit a three-run blast in the sixth off Milwaukee reliever Sean Maloney. He has 19 RBIs over the last 15 games.

Jeff D'Amico (0-2) started for Milwaukee and allowed a three-run homer to Dan Wilson and a two-run blow by Alex Rodriguez. D'Amico lasted five innings, allowing five runs and six hits.

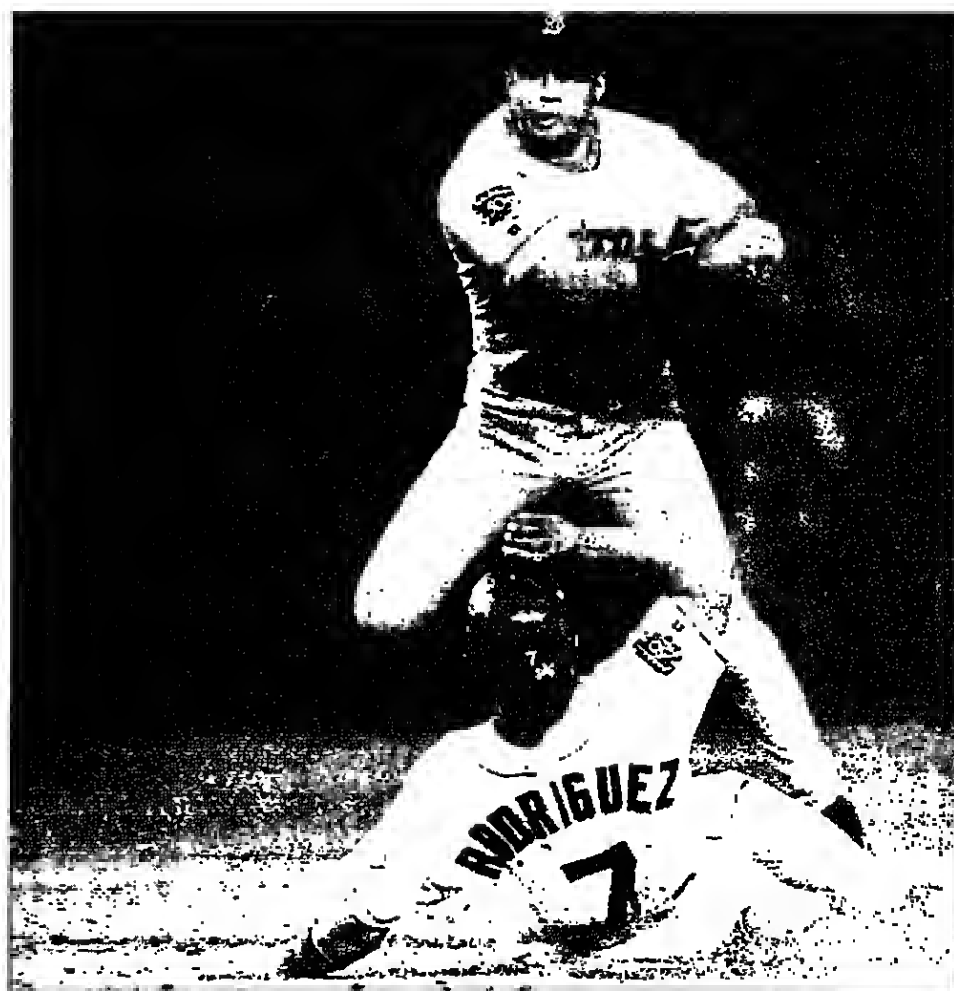
In Baltimore, Jimmy Key allowed one run over eight innings and Mike Bordick drove in three runs as the Orioles handed the Oakland Athletics a 7-1 beating for their fourth win in a row.

Key (5-0) allowed four hits, walked one and struck out five as he joined former teammate Andy Pettitte of the New York Yankees and Bobby Witt of the Texas Rangers with a league-leading fifth victory.

Armando Benitez gave up one hit in a scoreless ninth as Baltimore won for the sixth time in seven games. Oakland's Steve Karsay (0-2) gave up five runs and nine hits over six innings as the A's lost for the fourth time in five games.

In Toronto, Chuck Knoblauch's chopper over the head of third baseman Ed Sprague with two out scored Todd Walker in the top of the 10th inning as the Minnesota twins snapped an eight-game losing streak with a 3-2 win over the blue jays.

Brad Radke (2-1) pitched the first nine innings for Minnesota, allowing two runs and five hits. Rick Aguilera allowed a single in

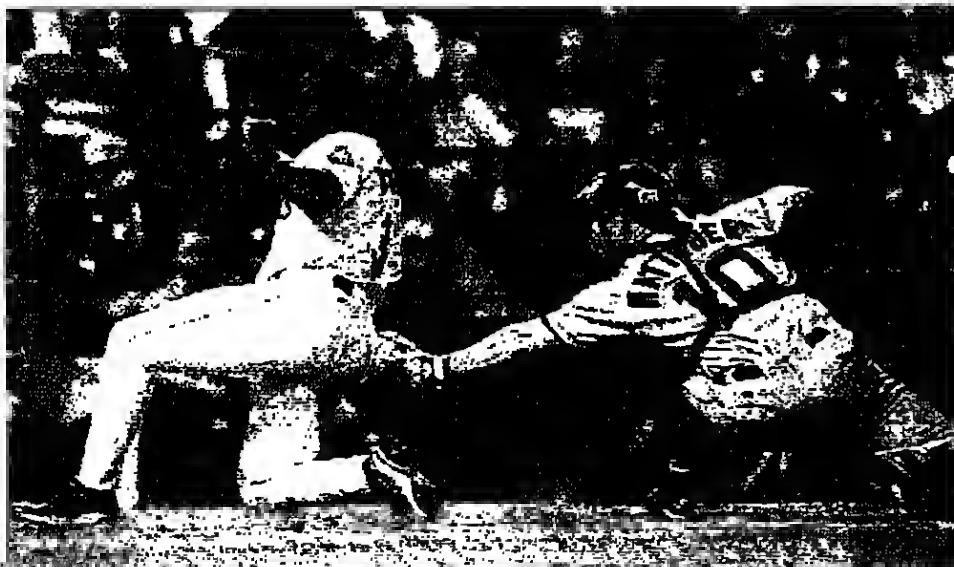


Boston Red Sox second baseman John Valentini throws to first base to complete a double play on Texas Rangers' Ivan Rodriguez during the 9th inning. The Red Sox defeated the Rangers 5-4 (Reuters photo).

the 10th hut held Toronto scoreless for his fifth save.

At Texas, John Valentini's single with two outs in the top of the ninth scored pinch-runner Jeff Frye with the winning run as the Boston Red Sox nipped the

Rangers 5-4. Butch Henry (2-1) earned the win with two scoreless innings of relief.



Boston Red Sox catcher Scott Hattaberg tries in vain to tag Texas Rangers' second baseman Mark McLemore as he scores the Rangers' first run in the third inning in Arlington (Reuters photo).

Thompson said. "I had no velocity. I threw 82-86 (miles-per-hour). I can't explain that, that's not me. I threw that hard when I was a freshman in high school."

The Rockies, who had won their last five games at Coors field, scored twice in the bottom of the first and added a run on Kirt Manwaring solo homer in the fifth.

In Houston, Shane Reynolds allowed one run over eight innings and the Astros edged the Marlins 2-1, handing Florida its club-record 10th straight road loss.

Reynolds (4-2), who beat the Marlins for the first time in his career, gave up seven hits and struck six with one walk. Jeff Bagwell hit his eighth

homer of the season for Houston and Derek Bell accounted for the other Astros run with a sacrifice fly.

Florida got its lone run in the second inning on Jeff Cone's fifth homer of the season.

In Atlanta, Mark Johnson's single with two outs in the top of the ninth inning scored Tony Womack, lifting the Pittsburgh Pirates to a 3-2 victory over the Braves.

Mets snapped the St Louis Cardinals' five-game winning streak with a 7-4 victory.

Ochoa's RBI put the Mets in front 5-4. They added two insurance runs in the eighth for Greg McMichael (2-2), who tossed two scoreless

innings in relief of starter Armando Reynoso as the Mets won for the fifth time in six games.

Butch Huskey had a two-run homer off St Louis starter Donovan Osborn in the second.

In San Francisco, Pete Schourek allowed just three hits over seven innings and Terry Pendleton took advantage of a key error with a two-run single in the sixth as the Cincinnati Reds beat the Giants 6-2.

Eddie Taubensee and Lenny Harris added solo homers for the Reds, who snapped a four-game losing streak.

Schourek (2-2) allowed two runs, walked one and struck out eight, including his 500th career strikeout — a whiff of Barry Bonds in the second inning.

Giants starter Osvaldo Fernandez (3-2) was tagged for five runs — three earned — and 10 hits in five

innings. In San Diego, Chris Widger's sacrifice fly

rallied for an 8-7 victory over the Chicago Cubs.

Gagne opened the 10th inning with a double down the right-field line off Bob Patterson (1-2), and advanced to third when right fielder Sammy Sosa

scored with a double, and South judged that the seventh trump card acceptance.

West's lead of the nine of clubs was certainly from shortness, so dealer's problem is to avoid losing two trump tricks. The obvious first step is to capture East's queen of clubs at trick one. The lead is a singleton, then draw trumps as expeditiously as possible. However, if you now play the ace of spades followed by the jack, West will win the king and shift to a red suit. You win with dummy's ace, but have no quick entry back to hand to draw the last trump. No matter what you do, East will gain the lead in a red suit, cash the king of clubs and lead another club, promoting partner's ten of clubs to the setting trick.

Can you do better? Certainly. Lead the jack of spades at trick two. West can win, but a club continuation makes life easy. Although West is free to ruff, that sets up clubs and, after drawing the remaining trumps, you can take two red-suit discards on the club suit to take 10 tricks.

Switching to a red suit is no better. You win the ace, lead a trump from dummy and, after drawing the remaining trump, play the ten of clubs. That sets up the jack for a red-suit pitch while there is still another ace on the table as an entry.

On this sequence, South's two-spade rebid promises a six-card suit. Since two aces are powerful cards in a suit contract, North had no hesitation about rebid in three.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANIAH HRSCH
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STAY IN TOUCH

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ 8 2
♥ A 5
♦ A 6 4 2
♣ J 8 7 4 3

WEST
♠ K 10 4
♥ Q 10 6 4 2
♦ J 9 3
♣ A 9 2

EAST
♠ 7
♥ K 9 7 3
♦ K 10 8 6
♣ K 5

SOUTH
♠ A Q J 8 6 5 2
♥ J 8
♦ Q 7
♣ A 10

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♠ Pass 1NT Pass
2♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
4♠ Pass 4♠ Pass

Opening lead: Nine of ♠.
If you know your side has an eight-card fit, don't hesitate about raising partner with only a low doubleton. North put that principle into practice to get North-South to a tenuous four-spade contract. Study all four hands and then decide whether, after the opening lead, you would rather play or defend.

On this sequence, South's two-spade rebid promises a six-card suit. Since two aces are powerful cards in a suit contract, North had no hesitation about rebid in three.

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U.K.'s Blair gets down to work; Tories open inquest

LONDON (R) — New Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair knuckled down Saturday to the task of translating his promised new dawn for Britain into the realities of government.

After a day of euphoria, greeting flag-waving crowds dizzy with joy at the Labour Party's biggest ever election victory, Mr. Blair was completing the line-up of the first Labour cabinet for 18 years.

The Conservative Party, reeling from its worst defeat for more than 100 years, started a postmortem and cast around for a new leader to rebuild its strategy and morale.

Mr. Blair has already appointed deputy Labour leader John Prescott as deputy prime minister. Grafton Scott Gordon Brown becomes chancellor of the exchequer, or finance minister, while another Scott, Robin Cook, takes over as foreign secretary.

The cabinet includes Britain's first blind minister, Education Secretary David Blunkett. It is also expected to include the first openly homosexual one, former health spokesman Chris Smith.

With his cabinet in place, 43-year-old Mr. Blair will begin drawing up his government's legislative programme for the year, which will be announced when Parliament reopens on May 14.

Mr. Blair had made education a priority and Mr. Blunkett said Saturday he would be taking specific steps to reduce class sizes.

Mr. Blunkett was keen to play down expectations among the British public for massive changes under Labour immediately.

"We cannot fulfill it all in the year ahead. We can start it — we can lay the foundations," Mr. Blunkett told BBC Radio.

But he promised: "What you will see, you will get, and that's the trust factor you will get under Tony Blair."

As Labour hushed itself with turning years of theory into action, shell-shocked senior Conservatives called for a period of calm before

plunging into elections for a new leader to replace John Major, who is stepping down.

Former Finance Minister Kenneth Clarke is the only Conservative to have thrown his hat into the ring so far. Other possible contenders, including former Deputy Premier Michael Heseltine, right-winger John Redwood and youthful William Hague, are biding their time.

Sir Norman Fowler, a former Conservative Party chairman, blamed disunity over the key issue of European integration for the party's downfall.

"One of the undoubted factors and the reason that we lost the general election was the fact that the party wasn't only reluctant to come together but refused to come together and that was one of the real reasons why we lost. We have to restore the traditional discipline in the party," Mr. Fowler told BBC Radio.

At least 200 Conservatives openly defied Mr. Major's "wait-and-see" line on a proposed single European currency during the election campaign. He was forced into a desperate plea to his party not to tie his hands in European Union negotiations he will now never take part in.

Labour's landslide feminises parliament

LONDON (AFP) — The appointment of five women to the cabinet on Saturday, following Labour's landslide victory in British general elections, dealt another blow to the male-club atmosphere of the House of Commons.

The number of women deputies voted into the world's oldest parliament has doubled to 120 out of 659, topping 100 for the first time and including the first women twins. Many of the women were Labour deputies, selected as candidates from women-only lists drawn up by the party, a policy which it has now abandoned.

On Saturday, the first woman Speaker Betty Boothroyd, who served in the last parliament, was joined by the first woman leader of the Commons Ann Taylor after she was appointed to the cabinet position by the new Prime Minister Tony Blair.

In other appointments, Mo Mowlam became Northern Ireland secretary, Clare Short minister for international development, Harriet Harman social secu-

riety secretary and Margaret Beckett trade and industry secretary.

The changes should go some way to altering the culture of the "mother of all parliaments," which at present has 11 bars, a rifle range but no nursery and a shortage of women's toilets.

A century ago in 1890, a female journalist was refused permission to work in the House of Commons press gallery after administrators said it would lead to "consequences which at present it is difficult to achieve," the Daily Telegraph reported.

The first woman deputy, Nancy Astor, entered parliament in November 1919, but in 1979 when Britain's first woman prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, was elected the number of women in parliament was just 19.

Following Thursday's polls, minorities have also increased their representation in parliament, with the election of five Asian and four black deputies for Labour, including Britain's first Muslim deputy, Mohammad Sarwar.

First 100 days crucial for Labour

LONDON (AFP) — The first 100 days will be crucial for Tony Blair's new Labour government, as several particularly important political, financial and diplomatic events fall within that period.

The principal events for the Labour government are as follows:

- May 4 and 5: Appointment of the new cabinet.
- May 5: EU intergovernmental conference in Brussels. The Labour government will be represented at cabinet level.
- May 7: Re-election of Betty Boothroyd as the Speaker of the House of Commons.
- May 7: Meeting between Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown and the Head of the Bank of England over interest rates.
- May 7-9: Sweating in of new parliament members.
- May 8: First meeting of the Labour cabinet at 10 Downing Street to discuss the contents of the queen's speech when she presents the government's programme for next year at the official opening of parliament.
- May 12: Mr. Brown's first meeting with European

finance ministers in Brussels to discuss the Euro.

— May 14: Official opening of parliament with the queen's speech.

— May 20: Mr. Blair holds his first parliamentary question time as prime minister, at the House of Commons.

— May 23: EU mini-summit in Noordwijk, Netherlands.

— June 16: EU summit in Amsterdam to discuss the reform of European institutions.

— June 22: Mr. Blair will attend his first G-7 economic summit in Denver, Colorado.

— June 23: Mr. Blair will address the General Assembly of the United Nations.

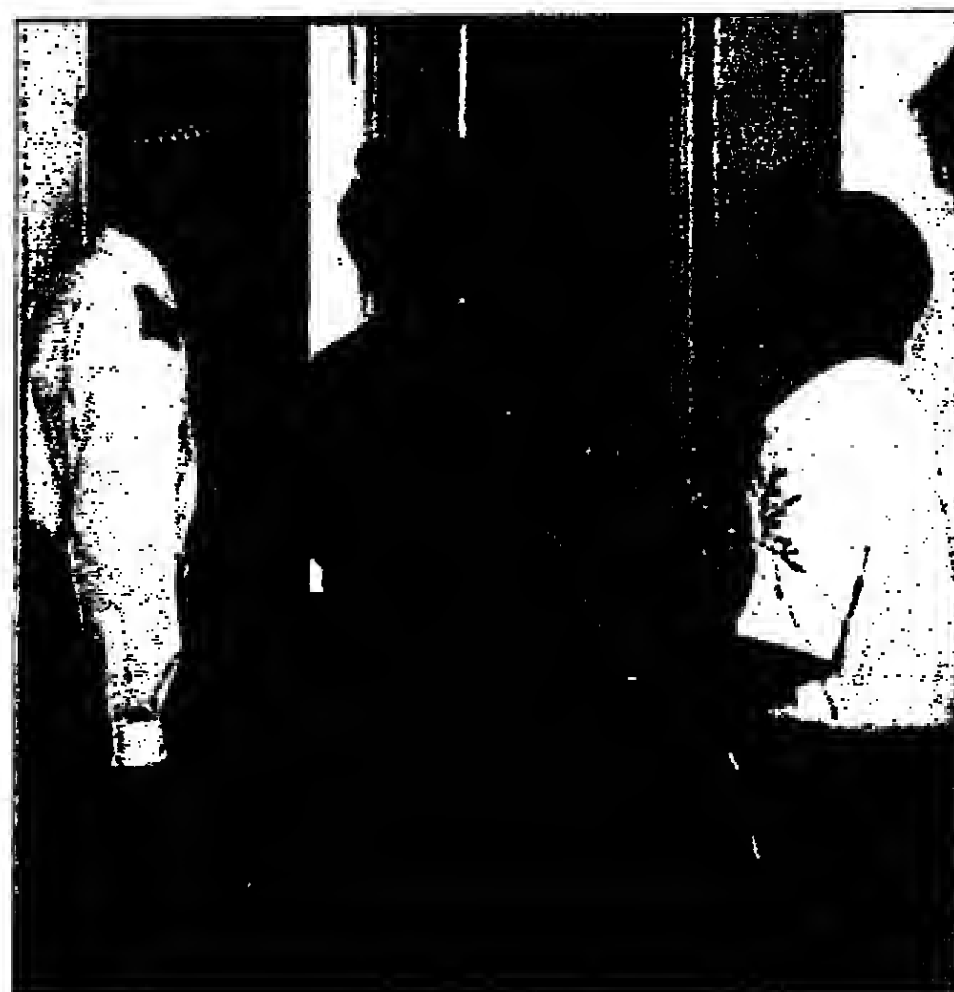
— June 30: The colony of Hong Kong reverts back to Chinese rule.

— July 10: Labour's first budget meeting where the tax on profits of privatised monopoly utilities will be discussed.

— August 7: Beginning of parliamentary recess.

— August 8: The 100th day of the new Labour government.

— August 10: Blair goes on vacation.



Blair's wife learns first lesson of the limelight

LONDON (AFP) — The wife of new British Prime Minister Tony Blair had a rude awakening to the perils of the limelight Saturday when her first full day as Britain's first lady began with what will surely prove to be her lifelong most embarrassing moment.

On the day after she was pictured in a chic suit with Mr. Blair and their children outside the famous door of 10 Downing Street, Cherie

Blair opened her own front door in Islington, north London, to a florist in what appeared to be her nightie.

Looking as though she had just been woken and wearing just a short button-down blue-grey shirt, she looked up to see lines of cameras and reporters on the other side of the road.

Stutters and zoom lenses whirled. The look on Cherie's face turned rapidly from mild embarrassment

to surprise and then horror.

It was as if Cherie, after what was probably her first good night's sleep for days, had forgotten about her husband's dramatic sweep to power Friday with a landslide unprecedented in Labour's history and her family's consequent new status in public life.

She pulled her shirt tightly around her, backed away behind the door and closed it.

Italian ambassador still in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — The Italian ambassador, the only envoy of the European Union (EU) to return to Iran, was still at his post here on Saturday, Italian diplomatic sources said.

Ludovico Ortona flew here Tuesday night hours after the EU countries decided to send their ambassadors back to Iran, after recalling them on

April 10 when a German court ruled that Tehran was involved in the 1992 assassination of four Kurdish dissidents in Berlin.

"The Italian ambassador is still here and he has not been asked to return to Rome," the sources said.

The EU on Thursday urged member countries to suspend the return of the ambassadors after Iran

said it would not allow the German ambassador to return here for some time.

France said Friday it was acting in accordance with a European appeal to suspend the return of EU ambassadors to Tehran until Iran explains its decision not to allow the German ambassador back.

But Greece said its ambassador was to return to Tehran within days.

Sharon criticises Israeli premier

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's hardline infrastructure minister, Ariel Sharon, said Saturday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government had lost credibility and lacked a clear direction.

In a rare public rebuke from a leading minister in Mr. Netanyahu's tight-wing coalition, Mr. Sharon denounced on Israel Radio "the poor functioning of the government, which has no clear goals and makes political negotiations impossible."

"The government of Mr. Netanyahu has lost its credibility," said Mr. Sharon, who has been one of the fiercest opponents of Israel's peace process with the Palestinians.

"We have to keep in mind the hostility in the Arab World, the arms buildup and the dangers of terrorism," Mr. Sharon said.

He said the government, formed last June, must "set, as rapidly as possible, its goals, along with the geographical map that will allow us to continue to live in our country, while determining the type of relations we want to have with our Arab and Palestinian neighbours."

"Because of a lack of control and balance, we have become a country directed by one man," Mr. Sharon said, adding that he was not targeting Mr. Netanyahu in particular but that it was "a question of principles."

IFHR claims 3,000 Algerian nationals have disappeared

PARIS (AP) — The International Federation for Human Rights said Friday that 2,000 to 3,000 Algerians have disappeared since the start of the 1992 Muslim insurgency and security crackdown in the North African nation.

The federation also said there were some 10 detention centres in Algiers and its suburbs where detainees are held by security forces and sometimes tortured.

The assessment came after a five-day trip to Algeria where an insurgency and a brutal crackdown by government forces have left at least 60,000 dead.

Algerian officials who met with the Paris-based team conceded there had been "excesses," but said such excesses were now limited and those responsible for them were being punished, according to the federation's president Patrick Baudouin.

But arbitrary arrest and detention continues in centres operating outside the official prison system, Mr. Baudouin said.

Algerian authorities contend such centers are no longer operational.

"But we have a certitude (they exist). We met people who were in them," Mr. Baudouin said in a telephone interview. "We have a list of about 10 centres in Algeria and its suburbs."

Mr. Baudouin said his

figure of 2,000-3,000 disappeared was a conservative estimate that could include disappearances of youths who join the militants.

The government-run National Observatory for Human Rights told the team it registered 988 disappearances of various origins in 1996.

"It is certain we must not lose sight of terrorist acts committed by Islamists ... that we condemn without reserve," Mr. Baudouin said.

Anti-government guerrillas have claimed responsibility for some massacres in rural villages that have become increasingly frequent this year.

"But the state must assume its responsibility..." Mr. Baudouin said. "It must use legal means respectful of human rights and in conformity with international conventions that Algeria has signed."

Last month, the London-based human rights organisation Amnesty International urged the 15-nation European Union to put pressure on the Algerian government to end "institutionalised torture," and to conduct rigorous investigations into charges of abuse by security forces.

The federation's report on the human rights situation in Algeria is to be released at a later date.

U.S. will not extradite Lebanese businessman

BEIRUT (AP) — The United States has rejected a Lebanese request to arrest and extradite a Lebanese-American businessman facing embezzlement charges in Lebanon, the state-run National News Agency reported Friday.

Lebanon has accused Roger Tamraz, 56, of embezzling some \$200 million from the collapsed Al Mashreq Bank when he was its chairman.

Tamraz, now a U.S. citizen living in New York City, disputes the charges, saying they were fabricated by the Lebanese government in retaliation for his contacts with Israeli officials.

Lebanon issued an arrest warrant for him in 1989 and asked Interpol, the international police agency, to declare him an international fugitive, according to Lebanese officials and records.

Prosecutor-General Adnan Addoum in September asked U.S. authorities to take measures aimed at arresting Tamraz and extraditing him to Lebanon to stand trial.

The National News Agency said Mr. Addoum on Friday received a letter from the United States rejecting the Lebanese request since the two countries lack an extradition treaty.

In Washington, Justice Department spokesman John Russell refused to comment on the report.

Tamraz has gained notoriety as being among the businessmen, particularly those with foreign connections, whose visits to the White House and donations to the Democratic Party have led to criticism of President Bill Clinton.

Tamraz attended six White House social events in the last two years, and his U.S.-based oil company donated \$72,000 to the party in 1995 and 1996.

In addition to the bank charges, a Lebanese military tribunal accused him of collaborating with Israel and in 1996 sentenced him in absentia to three years in jail.

Turkey to close Islamic courses

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's interior minister vowed on Saturday to close down thousands of outlawed Islamist education centres in a military-inspired crackdown against religious activism, Anatolian news agency said.

"Not one illegal Koranic course, religious hostel or similar institution will remain," the agency quoted Minister Meral Aksener as saying.

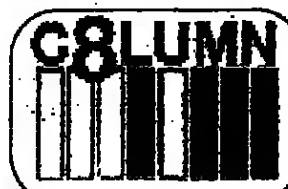
"We will take all the necessary precautions to prevent our country's bright horizon from darkening," said Mr. Aksener, from the secularist wing of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's coalition government.

The secularist army has demanded that the government curtail growing Islamist sentiment in what it says is a matter of life or death for Turkey. But Mr. Erbakan's Islam-based Welfare Party has stalled on implementing the crackdown.

Mr. Aksener said the dozens of underground Koranic classes closed by police in recent raids represented less than two per cent of the number of illegal courses.



BACK ON THE ROAD: Uday Hussein, eldest son of President Saddam Hussein, is seen, in this picture released late May 1, driving his Porsche along the street where he was shot and seriously wounded almost five months ago (Reuters photo)



Danish inmate continues life of crime

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — A Danish prisoner thought he had the perfect alibi in a string of burglaries — he was behind bars. But police discovered the 29-year-old man regularly slipped out of his cell by night to burglarise houses and shops and then returned to jail with his loot. The man, who is serving a prison term for armed robbery in Jyderup, west of Copenhagen, was found out when prison guards searched his cell and discovered stolen goods worth \$6,000. "He managed to push apart the bars of his cell every night and leave the prison, which has no surrounding wall but an exterior fence, undisturbed," Inspector Poul Erik Pedersen said. The man, who committed at least seven burglaries, carefully replaced the bars every night on his return. He denied the crimes in court.

Donald Trump to divorce again

NEW YORK (AFP) — Real estate mogul Donald Trump and his bombshell wife Maria are calling it quits on their three-year marriage, saying they would separate as friends. Media reports said the couple, who have a four-year-old daughter Tiffany, would end their marriage after a tempestuous courtship ended Donald's previous marriage to Ivana. Under Donald and Maria's prenuptial agreement, Trump, 50, has to pay his wife, 33, between \$1 and \$3 million for the divorce. The accord stipulates the package would double once the marriage entered its fifth year. The two were married Dec. 20, 1993.

Patrick Swayze injured in chase scene filming

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Heart-throb actor Patrick Swayze was injured when his vehicle flipped as he filmed a chase scene through a farm field in Yolo, California. Swayze, who starred in the musical film "Dirty Dancing," suffered cuts and left the field with a bandaged right elbow after a shoot Thursday for "Letters From A Killer." A cinematographer working on the film was also cut and a stunt coordinator was splashed in the face with gasoline, local television reported.

Urdangarin to formally ask for princess's hand in marriage

MADRID (AFP) — Sports star Inaki Urdangarin will officially ask for the hand of Cristina, the younger daughter of King Juan Carlos of Spain, on Saturday night between two international handball matches. Inaki, who has already played some 120 matches for the Spanish handball team, will miss the second match of a four match tournament to formally ask King Carlos and Queen Sofia for Cristina's hand in marriage. The engagement ceremony is due to take place at 7:00 p.m. at the Zarzuela Palace in Madrid. Besides the press, only close members of the two families will attend. The princess, 31, whose full name is Cristina Federica Victoria Antonia of Bourbon and Greece, met 29-year-old Inaki, star of the Spanish handball team, at the Atlanta Olympic Games last year, where the team won the bronze. Their marriage will take place late this year, probably in Barcelona where the popular couple live.